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Bridging Connections Between Teachers' Racial Identities and Their Teaching Practices

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**Bridging Connections Between Teachers' Racial Identities
and Their Teaching Practices**

**A Dissertation in
Educational Studies**

submitted by

Sandras M. Barnes

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**LESLEY UNIVERSITY
August
2001**

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

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Approvals

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how three Black female teachers and three White female teachers of kindergarten, first grade, and eighth grade understand the connections between their racial identity and their teaching practices. Specifically, it sought to understand how they experience their first awareness of racial difference and the influence their family, community, and school had on their construct of race. Also, how their preparation to teach reinforced, expanded, altered, or demystified their understanding of racial differences as a means to teach all children. The study used a phenomenologically based, lived experienced methodology to interview the six female teachers as they recalled, reflected, analyzed, described, and interpreted their ways of knowing and living in a racialized world. The study found the connections between the teachers' racial identities and their teaching practices lie in the attitudes and actions of their families and their reactions to dominant/oppressive beliefs that became part of their every day lived experiences. These experiences made these teachers classify and internalize these beliefs as truths or as myths. Also, their teacher education programs provided no teaching strategies and racial content to connect their experiential and analytical ways of knowing that bridged their racial identity and teaching practices.

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In Memory of

**Uncle William "Bo" Barnes, Jr.
Aunt Christine Barnes House
Aunt Susie Barnes**

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· CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When I was about nine years old, I followed my little brother and his friends into the woods behind my step-grandparents' house. As they approached a group of young White boys in a clearing near a ditch they saw that the boys had tied two ropes with two tires at one end of them and wrapped the other ends of the ropes over a thick tree limb. I stood still, watching the White boys expecting something bad to happen. They called out to my brother and his friends like they had known each other forever. They explained to my brother how they got the ropes tied around the limb and how they were going to make a game of the tires and ropes. My brother and his friends watched the White boys run and jump on the tires, swing to the other side of the ditch, and jump off. Showing no fear my brother and his friends tried it. Before long they were laughing, joking, jumping on each other, and having a good time. I kept watching the little White boy who was doing all the talking and wondering why was he was talking so animated to my brother now and would not so much as whisper to him when we were with my step-grandmother in the store next to his house.

But that was in the South. I grew up in Virginia in Southampton County where Nat Turner in 1831 led a slave revolt and signs remained posted in the early nineteen sixties that said "Whites Only" and "Colors Only" designating points of entrance. So, I was aware that White people and Black people knew "their place". I was five years old when the pharmacist told my mother she could not sit at the counter to wait for her prescription because it was for Whites only. So, I cautioned my brother about what the White people would do if they saw "Colored children and White children playing

together.” Not trusting me to keep my mouth shut, he told me they were not going back there again. In spite of his efforts to keep me from following him into the woods, I knew they continued to play by the ditch for a long time. I never ceased to wonder why it was so important to White adults to keep their children away from Black children. I was never told to stay away from White people. I was told to be careful of what I said and how I acted around them. Growing up in the South, I knew that something bad happened to Black people when they said or did something that excited White people.

Whenever I reflect about the time when I first became fully cognizant of racial differences, the ditch in the wood comes to mind. I recall thinking deeply about what it was about the White boys' pale skin that would not allow us to openly play together. What was the mystery behind our skin color? Whatever the mystery was about our different hues it separated us and as Black and White children. Yet, we all understood enough about racial differences to know that we could not be seen playing together. Our very first lessons about “race” based on skin color began at home. My step-grandmother worked in the homes of many of the White children who played with my brother and his friends in the wood. I often overheard what was going on in their homes and knew they had very little, if any, knowledge about what took place in our house. I knew they did not know because I learned from Black adults in the family and the community not to “air our dirty laundry” and White folks did not work in our houses. So, as children we mimicked the language and social behavior of the adults in our homes and communities that instructed us how to live in a racialized world. Racialization describes and explains the interactions and reactions to people and situations that are

grounded in a racial context (Webster, 1992). Schools in segregated communities are grounded in a racialized context.

The teachers in the elementary school I attended were also an integral part of my family and community. They instilled in me the importance of education, spirituality, family, friendships, community, and hard work, yet they provided very little insight into the mystery of racial differences that locked people in a relationship of domination/oppression. Neither my teaching preparation program nor my student teaching allowed me to critically examine race as part of my lived experience and utilize that information as a source of knowledge (hooks, 1994). I did my student teaching at South Boston High School in 1978 and was not challenged by the teacher educator nor did the cooperating teachers challenge me to think about the connections between my racial identity and my teaching practices. During the early 1970's South Boston was the focus of the nation's attention because the Massachusetts Supreme Court forced busing to desegregate Boston Public Schools. Black and White teachers and students were caught in the mist of a very volatile racialized environment. My teacher education program did not provide me with an understanding of the correlations between my racial identity and my construct of race. Nor did my education in general broaden my understanding of race relations between all people in a society where they are racially classified.

Race is a powerful and emotional issue in the United States. As a political and social construct, race shapes public policies, beliefs, and the socialization of every person in this country. It is emotional because it taps into people's fears of the unknown "other" and the human conditions of all people. Discussions about race generally focus

on the problems of Black people and rarely about “the flaws of American society – flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes” (West, 1993, p.3). The United States is a profoundly flawed society and schools serve to further enhance those flaws through institutional racism. Schools have not been successful in eradicating ideas of or assumptions about racial and cultural superiority. Schools are institutions that mask power in the myths that rationalize inequality which often reinforce injustices for some at the same time that they offer opportunities to others (Tyacks, 1974). In other words, some educational policies and practices in schools privilege some groups of teachers and students and marginalize others through patterns of communication, decision-making, curriculum, and pedagogy. Thus, they perpetuate feelings of discomfort, disempowerment, and fear.

Many prospective teachers inherit these feelings of discomfort, dis-empowerment and fear about racial issues from home and school if they have not been taught critically to examine who they are in relationship to others in a racialized society. The discourse about racial identity that acknowledges the ideological and political construct of race and its significance in teaching and learning is rarely addressed in teacher education programs (Hidalgo, 1993; Nieto, 1994). In fact, many teacher education programs instruct their students not to let race, gender, and social class influence their teaching practices. Consequently, some teachers learn that racial identity does not and should not matter, and that the nation has become a “color-blind” society (Ravitch, 1985). This color-blind attitude towards education

denies the legitimacy of students’ heritage and race and often contributes to a cycle of misunderstanding that leads to unstated and unvented hostility between teachers and students (Irvine, 1991, p.27).

Other assumptions of this color-blind approach are the following: one, that all teachers will maintain the same level of expectations for all students; two, that all teachers will be fair and not respond to stereotypes; and three, that all children will believe that they are treated equally and learn to perceive their lives as morally neutral, ideal, and having nothing to do with race.

Teachers' knowledge of racial issues and their beliefs about race and racial identity have implications for their teaching practices, where they teach, and the expectations they hold for the students they teach (Garcia, 1982; Dilworth, 1990; Irvine, 1991; Foster, 1991; McIntyre, 1997). The research on the education of teachers has not explicitly linked teachers' racial and ethnic identities and backgrounds with their use of effective teaching practices (Foster, 1997). Teacher educators have also failed to provide prospective teachers with connections between the issues of race and racial identity to educational policies and practices within their classrooms. So, how and when do prospective teachers learn to recall and reflect critically on their lived experiences that raise a level of awareness and consciousness about their racial identities as well as that of others?

This study is a phenomenological investigation of what three Black and three White women who are elementary and middle school teachers in the Boston Public Schools think about their racial identities in the context of their teaching practices. Phenomenology research seeks to uncover the meanings that individuals make of their everyday lives (van Manen, 1990). To uncover the meaning of a specific event requires the teacher to recall what happened and reflect on the significant of the occurrence as it applies to their life experiences. In this study teachers were asked to recall some

specific lived racial experiences in order to understand how they construct or do not construct their racial identity. Special attention is given to how these teachers experience racial issues within their families, communities, and the schools where they teach, as well as how they were prepared to teach in a racialized society.

The intent of this study is to learn how these three Black and three White teachers think about their racial identities in the context of their teaching practices. It also explores the degree to which the values and racial beliefs about self and others learned at home and in their communities were or were not challenged in their preparation to teach all children. The two primary **research questions** that guide this study are:

1. How do teachers connect their racial identity and their teaching practices?
2. What, if anything, from their teacher preparation program experiences raised their awareness of racial issues in education?

The study identifies some connecting themes of the teachers' teaching practices, their philosophy of education, and their belief systems about racial identities. The study also reports critical incidents that shape the teachers' understanding of racial issues and how that understanding becomes significant in their teaching practices. These themes provide a useful framework to explain the connections between teaching and racial identity.

Special attention is given to how Black and White teachers define their own racial identities and how their racial identities influence the way they teach and interact with all students in their classrooms. In order to guard against sweeping generalizations and over simplifications of the complexities of racial differences and racial identities, this

research focuses on the lived experiences of these six Black and White teachers at a particular time and moment in their lives and in their careers. The findings in this study are limited to Black and White teachers and are not intended to speak to the experiences of other racial and ethnic groups. There may be differences in the findings of the lived experiences for other non-White racial groups.

Definitions

The debate about race and racial identity in the United States, as defined by the education research literature, and practiced institutionally and individually, is generally based on biological and moral attributes (Webster, 1992). In this study, race is defined by physical and moral characteristics that classify all human beings and are “presented as explanations of their behavior and historical development”(Webster, 1992). Yehudi Webster (1992) contends that race as a social theory is constructed by official, academic, and other institutional practices. In this framework, race and racial identity are ideological and political constructs that characterize the human condition of all people in the United States. The ideals and beliefs that people have about race are determined by how they experience racial policies and practices in their everyday life. The relationships between ideological and political constructs do appear to have the autonomy and power to shape our thinking and cause certain behaviors (McGary, 1999).

Racial identity and ethnic identity are not synonymous in the classification of people. A racial identity construct is based on skin color as established by legislative policies as well as physical features and language (Webster, 1992; Takaki, 1993;

Spring, 1997; Carter, 1999). An ethnic identity construct is based on cultural criteria such as shared language, customs, history, and country of origin (Tatum, 1997; Carter, 1999). The terms Black and White for the purpose of this paper are based solely on racial identity and are used to emphasize the issue of race as defined in this study. The terms Black and White are also capitalized because they refer to groups of people (Nieto, 1996). The teacher participants were asked to racially self-identify to determine the importance they place on their racial identity. The investigation of their racial beliefs provides valuable insight to how they racially or ethnically self-identify.

Teaching practices, for clarity in this study, are broadly defined to include more than the transmitting of knowledge through skills based and subject specific content. They include student and teacher interactions such as communication styles, body language, eye contact, positionality of teacher to student, setup of classroom, as well as any other observable and measurable teacher/student behavior that denotes a level of awareness of lived experiences in a racialized society.

Rationale for the Research

In Massachusetts, many teacher education programs offer a course on how to make curricular content relevant to the experiences of students from diverse racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds to demonstrate common teaching competencies for Provisional Certification with Advanced Standing.¹ This requirement is most often addressed through multicultural education, anti-racist education, urban

1. Massachusetts Department of Education. (1997). 603 CMR 7.0 Certification of Education Personnel. (7.11 Competencies for Certified Educators, (1)(a), Instructional Practice (3)(c).

education, as well as cultural relevant and diversity courses. Although there are critical teaching approaches in some of these education models (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1999), many prospective teachers learn that multicultural education, in particular, is about understanding non-White cultures, prejudice reduction, how to decorate bulletin boards and classrooms with pictures and posters of non-White heroes and heroines, multicultural books that supplement multicultural moments (i.e. Black History, Women, and Hispanic Months), celebrations (i.e. Chinese New Year, Thanksgiving) and sensitivity training (Sleeter, 1994; Nieto, 1996; Banks & Banks, 1997). This conceptual framework for multicultural education perceives “whiteness” as the norm and the “otherness” as exotic and deficient. This conceptual framework for multicultural education does not address the differential access to political and economic power that marginalizes some people in a racialized society. Consequently, many prospective teachers do not learn to think about the connections between racial identity and teaching in a socio-political context.

Critical ongoing dialogues about racial identity and education, between teacher educators and prospective teachers, are important to teaching practices that address the educational needs of all children in racialized schools. This analysis of racial differences is necessary in light of the changing racial demographics of teachers and students. Teachers of color make up about fourteen percent of all current K-12 teachers in the United States. Children of African American, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, and Native American descent make up one-third of the student population, and this figure is rising (Haselkorn and Calkins, 2000, p.74). The following tables illustrate the racial demographics of classroom teachers, the presence of people of color in K-12 schools,

the percentage of students in large urban schools and the distribution of full time educators in higher education. The statistical data in the following tables come from a variety of sources where the racial classification of teachers and students changes from: Black to African American and people of color; White to Caucasians. However, for consistency in this study, the terms Black and White will be used.

Table 1

Presence of People of Color in K-12 Schools

Caucasian Students	*64%
Students of Color	36%
Caucasian Teachers	**86%
Teachers of Color	14%
Caucasian Teachers in training	***80%
Teachers of Color in Training	20%

Sources* and following NCES, *Condition of Education*, 1999

**and following U.S. Depart of Education, *Promising Practices: New Ways to Improve Teaching*, 1998

*** and following AACTE, *Teacher Education Pipeline IV*, 1999

Table 2

Estimated number of classroom teachers, public and private schools* **3.1 millions**
 Percentage who teach elementary grade levels (K-8) **61%**

Percentage who teach in private schools	18%
Percentage who are female	74%
Percentage who are	
African American	7.3%
Hispanic	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
Native American	1%

*Source: following NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1997

Table 3
Students in large urban schools

African American	40%
Hispanic	30%
White	21%
Asian/Pacific	6.4%
Alaskan/Native American	.6%

Source: The Urban Teacher Challenge, 2000

Table 4
Percentage distribution of full-time
Education Instructional faculty in
institutional of higher education, Fall
1992

F-T in thousand	37
Percentage	7.1
Male	48.9
Female	51.1
Race/Ethnicity	
White, Non Hispanic	84.7
Black, Non Hispanic	9.4
Hispanic	3.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.6
America Indian/Alaskan Native	1.0

Source: The Urban Teacher Challenge, 2000

David Haselkorn and Andrew Calkins (2000) point out that, nationally, twenty percent of teachers of color are in training. With less than ten percent of Black full-time education faculty in colleges and universities, Black prospective teachers are more likely to be taught by White teacher educators. Eighty percent of White prospective teachers in training will be taught by White teacher educators. Many White and Black prospective teachers will never be taught by a Black teacher educator who would bring critical knowledge from her life experiences—whether it be of victimization or resistance—(hooks, 1994) of the deeply rooted reality of racial policies and practices. Black teacher educators are needed to articulate their own personal experiences as a means to end the silenced dialogue (Delpit, 1995) and increase cross-cultural communication that explains their idiosyncratic styles of teaching and relating to their students (Irvine, 1991).

Lisa Delpit, (1995) an African-American teacher educator, provides a “connecting and complex theme” for the silence about racial identity and teaching called “the culture

of power". One of her premises about power is "those with power are frequently least aware of-or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence"(p.26). The lived experiences of many White teacher educators do not always include awareness and/or acknowledgment of their personal power and access to that particular code of power that is considered "truth" regardless of the opinions of people of color (Delpit, 1995). In other words, many White teacher educators are not cognizant of living in a racially classified society nor are they aware of their access to power that is attached to the privileges assigned to being White (McIntosh, 1990). Just as important, many White teachers are not cognizant of the power that is also inherent in teaching all prospective teachers. Cynthia Ellwood (1995) a White teacher educator, acknowledges the disparity of power between White and Black teachers. She states,

We cannot train white teachers and we cannot fully explore questions of urban education if "we" as a group of white people with all the best of intentions in the world, who nevertheless only hear our own voices (p.249).

Ellwood's point is that even White teacher educators who have the best of intentions stick together on common definitions of issues that involve race relations, and behave accordingly (Sleeter, 1994). This quote also demonstrates that there is a danger in not allowing Black teachers' voices into the dialogue. How will White teacher educators know whether they are using their power to prepare prospective teachers to transgress against racial boundaries or maintain the status quo without the voices of Black teacher educators to help them decode the culture of power? At the heart of this phenomenological investigation are the voices of both White and Black teachers

recalling their lived experiences of racial awareness and how they experienced that awareness within their teaching practices. Each teacher participant remembers and revisits the lessons their parents taught them about racial differences that informed their racial beliefs about their identities and the identities of their students. They also talked about lessons learned in their teacher education programs that magnified their racial beliefs and teaching practices. Their words provide useful information needed to understand the connections between their racial identity and their teaching practices. The following chapters offer the following: Chapter Two reviews the literature that examines the characteristics of race as a political construct embedded in educational policies and practices; Chapter Three describes the methodology; Chapter Four profiles the six teachers; and Chapter Five presents the study's findings, the implications and recommendations. The names of the teachers, schools, and their locations in this study have been changed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Racialization in Education

Introduction

This literature review focuses on three core themes relevant to the study: race in education; teachers' racial identity; and teachers' pedagogical practices. The purpose of this literature review is to explore how racial classification, based on anatomical characteristics, becomes a political construct embedded in educational policies and practices. Within this exploration, special attention is given to how Black and White teachers define their own racial identities, whether they believe their racial identity affects the way they teach and interact with all students in their classrooms and what beliefs about racial differences did they learn at home and in their teacher training. In order to guard against sweeping generalizations and over simplifications of the complexities of racial differences and racial identity, the review of the literature focuses on the socialization and education of Black and White teachers. There may be differences in the experiences and socialization for other non-White racial groups, therefore the findings in this study are not intended to speak to the experiences of other groups. Finally, this literature review examines how culturally relevant teaching can challenge teachers to critically examine the central aspects of their cultural identity while preparing to teach all children.

Racialization in Education

This section focuses on how the concept of race became politicized in educational policies and practices, thus influencing and shaping social relationships

between teachers and students, teachers with other teachers, and teachers and curriculum.

Most United States' teachers are taught by their schools of education to advocate the following values in their classrooms: individualism, free enterprise, self-reliance, equality of economic opportunity, democracy, and mainstream "American" history (Dewey, 1916; Katz, 1971; Garcia, 1982; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The goal is to inculcate these social and industrial values as the cultural norms (Katz, 1971). These social, economic, and political values dominate the United States' culturally specific beliefs and values, which influence and shape the socialization of families (Dewey, 1916; Garcia, 1982; Katz, 1971; Helms, 1992; Spring, 1994; Nieto, 1996). Dewey (1916) believed "any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depend upon the habits and the aims of the group"(p.83). The common school reformers in the nineteenth century shared these values and institutionalized them to "ensure that one set of cultural values remained dominant"(Spring, 1994). These norms were authenticated through teaching practices, textbooks, and school structures to guarantee a "unified national culture" and to halt "the drift toward a multicultural society" (Spring, 1996; Garcia, 1982, Webster, 1992).

Joel Spring (1996) makes a strong argument in his book, *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of the Education of Dominated Cultures in the United States*, about how the "founding fathers" halted the shift to a multicultural society by acts of conquest and the process of deculturalization. He contends that the United States' "founding fathers" justified "their actions by *claiming* cultural and political

superiority” over people-of-color. Ronald Takaki, (1993) adds that the English settlers brought with them to the new world a feeling of racial superiority because of England’s conquest of Ireland. Yehudi Webster, (1992) writes that, “the founding fathers, legislators . . . appropriated a specific type of racial classification and *suggested* that it is the basis of their judgment and policies” (p.9). He defines “Black” and “White” as the “classification of persons by persons, not [the] creation of nature” (p.9). The early government leaders’ “claims” and “suggestions” about the concept of race influenced the pioneers of American education and played an integral part in engineering school policies that stripped people of their cultural beliefs and behaviors for the purpose of assimilation and social control (Dewey, 1916; Webster, 1992; Takaki, 1993; Spring, 1994; Howard, 1999). These government leaders’ concepts of “race [were] primarily defined according to skin color” (Spring 1996, p.73). Ironically, other Europeans, such as the Irish, were considered to be racially inferior, so the term “White” was primarily reserved for British Protestant descendants (Takaki, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995; Spring, 1996). This racial construct according to Webster’s (1992) book, *The Racialization of America* is what makes the concept of race illogical and contradictory. Hence, race as a learned category (Howard, 1999) led to irrational educational, social, and economic policies. For example, the United States Supreme Court’s 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* ended separate but equal schools, resulted in Black teachers losing their jobs and being replaced by White teachers (Wolters, 1984; Foster, 1995).

Webster’s (1992) perspective suggests educators have historically promulgated the “socio-biological references to the genetic deficiencies of nonwhites” (p.103) and reinforced the belief that the “U.S. society has racial and ethnic groups that are locked

in a relationship of domination/oppression" (p.13). Consequently, public schools became educational bureaucracies to inculcate the cultural norms that maintain racial classification (Katz, 1971; Webster, 1992). For example, teachers are required to give a count of students by race for school census, state and federal services, free lunch program, etc. They most often record what they perceive as the students' racial identity based on their skin color rather than asking students to identify themselves. Cultural lessons that promote "American" history as the most important history, coded to mean "White," (Helms, 1992) fail to educate teachers about the social, economic, and political realities that shape how students may racially self-identify. Therefore, those teachers who learned and subscribed to the idea that some racial groups in the United States were genetically inferior to others and unable to assimilate into the emerging United States society (Webster, 1991; Takaki, 1994) consciously or unconsciously supported educational policies and practices that became the "key to social control and improvement of society" (Spring, 1997, p.16). So, education and schooling promoted white supremacy.

Gary Howard (1999) advances the concept of race as a political construct through a positionality framework. Howard's theory asserts that people of color are consigned to subordinate roles to White people who are positioned as the norm by which others are measured. In his book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multicultural Schools*, he examines this issue of social positionality within social and historical hierarchies of dominance and subordination to illustrate how teachers see themselves and how others see them. He notes that social positionality

based on racial differences becomes “quantitative and observably measurable (i.e., income, education level, or job title)” and influences how Black teachers and White teachers socially relate to each other based on anatomical differences (Webster, 1992).

Within this social construct of race in education, most teachers were rarely taught that European immigrants were compelled to give up their foreign and threatening ways in order to assimilate (Howard, 1993). This omission ensured teachers would not recognize the process involved in constraining people-of-color to stay in subservient and subordinate roles and distorted their struggles to coexist in the United States. Education for many teachers did not encourage “thinking through race” (Frankenberg, 1993 p.138). Ruth Frankenberg (1993) refers to this as a mode of thinking about “the kind of difference race makes” (p.138) when examining the power differential and the inequalities among racial groups. Since most teachers are not taught to engage in a structural analysis of race in education as it connects to their racial identity, many of them continue to promulgate the United States’ culturally specific values and beliefs of racial and cultural superiority.

Discussions of race in education have led many teachers to believe that race is about Black people. Therefore, racial issues become “a Black problem” (West, 1993; Browser & Hunt, 1996). Most teachers have learned to address Black students’ academic issues as dysfunctional, deviant, deficient, and exceptional. These same issues are prevalent in the teachers’ mis-education, omission, and distortion about the deculturalization of Native Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, and other people-of-color. Disallowing the importance of diverse people’s language, religion, traditions, and other cultural norms because of their racial differences further positions

the White culture as the norm and marginalizes the "Others" as different. Thus, many White teachers in particular, maintain the ideology of race and cultural superiority that is rooted in historical inequality and impacts all people in the United States.

Teachers' Meaning Making of Their Racial Identity

How teachers conceptualize racial identity is grounded in how they learned to construct the concept of race through socialization and education. Janet Helms (1993), a racial identity theorist, submits that what people believe, feel, and think about other racial groups, impacts their intra-personal and interpersonal interactions. She uses a psycho-social construct of race derived from Krogman's (1945) biological definition that perceived race as

a sub-group of people possessing a definite combination of physical characteristics, or genetic origin, the combination, of which to varying degrees distinguishes the sub-group from other sub-groups of mankind [sic] (p.49) (p.787) (as cited in Helms, 1993 p.3).

Racial identity is a social construct that influences teachers' values and beliefs about themselves and others (Tatum, 1997; McIntyre, 1997). Consequently, teachers learn to see the world through their values and beliefs and their racial gazes, which are formed long before teachers enter the classroom (Delpit, 1995; hooks, 1997). Delpit (1995) explains:

We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment - and that is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are, and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze (p.46-47).

Ladson-Billings' (1994) theory is that a teacher's racial identity is not just a personal identity but also one that is socially, politically, and culturally designated by others. Gary Howard (1999) surmises that this is so because race is, again, a learned category that is communicated to teachers through interactions with their own and other racial groups. Families and schools are the most affirming institutions for learning how race matters in the construction of a racial identity. Therefore, whether teachers consciously or unconsciously acknowledge their racial identity, the socialization process within these institutions influences the nature of their teaching practices.

Other cultural identifiers such as ethnicity, class, gender, language, religion, and life style orientation shape and influence teachers' teaching practices and curriculum, as well (Hidalgo, 1993; Weis & Fine 1993). These identifiers intricately intersect with and connect to racial identity and illustrate the complexities in identity development. Identities are constructed within social, cultural, and biological contexts, which inform teachers' values and beliefs.

Teachers make sense of their racial identity through the "group or collective identity based on one's *perception* that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helm 1993, p.3). Teachers' cultural traditions and norms are influenced by the racial heritage of their particular racial group. They construct their identity as a way of authenticating their experiences within the racial group.

This quest is undertaken together with other individuals with whom one identifies and from whom one desires acceptance. The result is the adoption of the group's norms as individual values and of the group's construction of identity. One's attitudes toward other groups become one of the bases for affiliation within one's own ethnic or racial group (Pinderhughes, 1997, p. 15.)

Beverly Tatum (1997) in *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race"*, proposes that teachers can make sense of their racial identity when they understand the "system of advantages based on race" that "clearly operates to the advantage of Whites and to the disadvantage of people-of-color"(p.7). This system involves "cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of the individual" (Tatum, 1997, p.7) that shape the individual's life experiences. This system gives Whites better access to social, cultural, and economic resources and decision-making power than it gives to people of color. The systematic advantages and power that are granted to Whites are based on skin color. These institutionalized advantages have led to a disproportionate number of White teachers and administrators with decision-making power in education.

Alice McIntyre (1997) supports Tatum's theory of the systematic advantage of skin color in education. She explores the development of White teachers' racial identities and notes that the structure of cultural differences "ignore[s] the racial identity of the classroom teacher and the system of whiteness that is the bedrock of the education system of the United States" (p. 13). Whereas, white supremacy acknowledges the ever-present advantages and privileges afforded to White teachers because of their skin color, it is indifferent to the obstructions and disadvantages afflicted on teachers-of-color because of their skin color. Hence, many White teachers do not perceive their racial identity as having anything to do with their positionality in a racialized society.

White Teachers

Peggy McIntosh (1988), a White feminist scholar, in her article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" provides forty-six examples of systematic advantages she experiences based on her skin color. McIntosh arrived at this realization because she is clearly grappling with the issues since she deals with them in her article. She had learned to remain oblivious to race because "Whites are carefully taught not to recognize White privilege" since it was "something which puts others at a disadvantage" (p.1). Examples of some of the things that she cited because of her White skin privileges are:

- *I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.*
- *When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization" I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.*
- *I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.*
- *I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.*
- *I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.*
- *I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own physical protection (p.5-8).*

These examples point to the fact that many White teachers accept the construct of race that positions them in a superior role to students of color and their families without questioning the structural imbalance. Like McIntosh, they may not view their beliefs and actions as racist or supporting a system of racial superiority. Their world-views exclude a structural analysis of race which prevents them from experiencing the

pain of turning themselves inside out as they see themselves in the unflattering light of people-of-color's angry gaze (Delpit, 1995). Janet Helms (1992) offers a rationale for why some White teachers downplay or deny their "whiteness" as a racial identity.

... White as a skin-color symbolizes power and oppression in this country. White is the skin color of the people who historically have conquered, enslaved, and oppressed people of color. It would not be surprising if many White people become uncomfortable when they think of themselves as "looking like" a member of the aggressive group (p.9)

This rationale suggests that some White teachers are cognizant of the "action orientation" of the white culture, which Helms (1993) defines as "everyone is responsible for what happens to her/him and controls one's own fate" (p.13). This attitude allows them to distance themselves from aspects of their culture that make them uncomfortable. Consequently, the social construct of race that is supported by their cultural and institutional norms reinforces their beliefs that being White means never having to think about it because whiteness has been defined by the American political and social structures. Many White teachers demonstrate this attitude in their teaching practices when they demand students work alone and their curriculum only emphasize the contributions that powerful White men and some White women have made to the growth and development of the United States.

Many White teachers believe they do not have a racial identity because they do not think of themselves in a white racial context (Nieto, 1996; Lawrence, 1997; Tatum, 1997; McIntyre, 1997). Many do not perceive race and racial differences as being culturally determined when they have been "allowed to retain their perspective and theories about the working of society" (Sleeter, 1995 p.417). Their whiteness remains

invisible and renders many of them color-blind. This notion of being color-blind has led to a misguided sense of “fairness”. Christine Sleeter (1993), an authority on issues in Multicultural Education, argues that many White teachers “profess color-blindness and support for equal opportunity” when in fact, they “behave in a very race-conscious manner”(p.33).

Vivian Paley (1979) in *White Teacher* professed to be color-blind when she first encountered Black children in her class. She believed in a color-blind approach when teaching all children. After Paley observed and listened to Black children’s ways of learning and making meaning of their experiences she reflected on her teaching practices and noticed that their skin-color influenced her expectations of their learning abilities. Paley attempted to explain to other teachers that skin color influenced and shaped their teaching practices when teaching Black children. However, the other teachers convinced her there was fairness in the color-blind approach.

There was a vigorous discussion. Our conclusions were these: more than ever we must take care to ignore color. We must look only at behavior, and since a black child will be more prominent in a white classroom, we must bend over backward to see no color, hear no color, speak no color. I did not argue against this position because I could not justify another (Paley 1979, p.7).

This color-blind approach to teaching and learning implies that all teachers will be fair and not respond to a stereotype, and that all children will believe they are treated equally and perceive their lives as morally neutral, ideal, and having nothing to do with their race. Though Paley claims to disregard students’ color, she had not comprehended how race operates systematically in order to dismantle the race-evasive discourse (Dickar, 2000). Evading discussions of race did not blind Paley to the fact that

children do make racial observations. Beverly Tatum (1997) writes, “when White children make racial observations, they are often silenced by their parents, who feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to respond” (p.201). Many White teachers’ learned from their families and schools to be color-blind. This reinforced the notion that skin color does not matter in their teaching practices. On the other hand, children-of-color feel their humanity is compromised because they have learned through family and community that skin color does matter.

Black Teachers

The American ideology based on the belief that all people in the United States have equal access to economic, social, and political opportunities if they acquire a good education has not resonated for most Black people. Access to schooling has not always been an option for them because slave codes made it illegal to teach enslaved Africans to read and write, Black teachers had to teach reading in underground schools and any place people could gather undetected by slave-masters. This subversive act became the foundation for Black teachers to perceive teaching as their social responsibility (Hines, 1993; Shaw, 1996; Foster, 1997). Though these enslaved educators lacked the economic and political power to impact social changes, they made inroads to develop schools in accordance with their own cultural needs (Anderson, 1988). Consequently, they were able to cultivate in Black children the cultural norms needed to maintain racial pride as well as the academic skills to be successful students and contributing members in their communities.

At the end of slavery there was a gradual increase in separate schools for Blacks and more Blacks were being educated as teachers (Mabee, 1979). Black teachers were hired primarily to teach Black children. There was the widespread belief that “black teachers were inferior to white teachers and not suitable to teach white children” (Foster, 1997, p. xxviii). After the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which ended separate but equal schools, many Black teachers lost their jobs (Wolter, 1984). As White teachers replaced Black teachers, many Black teachers were fearful that most White teachers would not “appreciate black children and their strength” (Foster, 1997, p. XLV).

Most Black teachers, on the other hand, notice the power differential and structural inequality of a racialized society and acknowledge that their Blackness influences who they are and their teaching practices (Coppin, 1913; Clark, 1990; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Foster, 1997). Referring once more to examples cited from Peggy McIntosh's list, Michele Foster's (1997) study of Black teachers on teaching reflects the reality of the daily existence of many Black teachers. For example, many Black teachers cannot arrange to be in the company of others in their race without being suspected of "conspiring against the system". Most Black teachers cannot be assured that when they enter schools that they will not be expected to speak for and be responsible for all the students of their race. Black teachers cannot be assured they will have access to curricular materials that affirm them and students of their race. Consequently, the intersection between their racial identity and teaching practices are linked to their life experiences as members of a group that is marginalized in a racially constructed society.

Cheryl Thigpen, a Black teacher in Michele Foster's study of Black teachers on teaching, explicitly illustrates how the intersection between her racial identity and teaching practices is linked to her life experience in a racially constructed society.

I was working with urban black kids because that's where I wanted to be. I have always felt that the knowledge I have should be shared with black kids. Why should I pass it out to little white kids? They're going to make it in this world. A lot of white folks out there, even if they don't learn how to read and write well, there are still opportunities for them. White folks are still going to give those white kids jobs. I've always felt that I was too talented and had too much to give to white children (Foster, 1997, p.68).

Thigpen's decision to work with urban Black kids signifies that she considers teaching to be both a political act and her social responsibility. Her understanding and experience of racial policies influenced her decisions. She defined her role as not only geared to teach Black children skills for survival (i.e. reading & writing) but also to provide them with a role model who can help them navigate the racial landscape of social, economic, and political inequity and oppression.

Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1994), an African-American educator, story of her second grade African-American teacher taking her and her classmates on a field trip downtown illustrates how explicitly a Black teacher explained the racial landscape to her students.

"Now remember," admonished Mrs. Gray, "when we get downtown people will be looking at us. If you misbehave they're not going to say, look at those bad children. They are going to say look at those bad colored children!" She did not have to tell us twice. We knew that we were held to a higher standard than other people. We knew that people would stare at us and that the stares would come because of our skin color (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 30-31).

Many Black teachers acknowledge their racial identity and respond to how it becomes the context that shapes and influences their teaching practices (Ladson-

Billings, 1994; Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1997). The above quote from Gloria Ladson-Billings exemplifies the intersection between Mrs. Gray's racial identity and her teaching practices. Although Mrs. Gray was explicit in telling her students that their behavior would be judged by their skin color, she was also implying that her ability to discipline her students would be judged in the same manner. Mrs. Gray's remarks indicate that she "behaved in a very race-conscious manner" because she acknowledged racial differences, which shaped her and her students' world-view.

Many Black teachers bring to the profession a socio-political world-view about race that is constructed out of their history, tradition, education, life experiences, and vested interests (Coppin, 1913; Clark, 1990; Hines, 1993; Shaw, 1996). Fannie Jackson Coppin (1913), one of the first Black women graduates of Oberlin College in 1865, writes "...it was in me to get an education and to teach my people. It was deep in my soul"(p.17). This world-view determines why Black teachers teach and how they teach. Many Black teachers strive to empower their students because of their sense of personal connectedness to structures of inequality and oppression. In other words, most of them know that their skin color matters and believe that their alternative perspectives will help students think critically about and challenge the inequity in the distribution of power and economic resources. Leonard Collins, a young Black teacher interviewed in a study of Black teachers on teaching conducted by Michelè Foster (1997), states,

I want kids to examine their world critically, to question everything. As kids get older they automatically accept the American ideology. But I don't want kids to just be the future; I want them to change the future (p.178).

Both Black and White teachers bring to the profession a socio-political world-view about race and racial identity that is constructed out of their histories, traditions,

education, vested interests and lived experiences. It is this interpretation of their lived experiences that defines their purpose for education and explains their reasons for teaching. Black teachers perceive education as a means to freedom and uplifting a race of people. White teachers perceive education as a means to the individual's freedom.

Cultural Relevant Practices

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), a critical race theorist, believes that education for social change does not stand alone as a problem that confronts society. She theorizes that the educational experiences of most teachers have not provided them with enough "instruction in logical reasoning" (Webster, 1992) to examine critically the central aspects of their own culture or the predominant United States culture while preparing to teach all children. This cognitive skill is essential because of the culture clashes that "pervade social and political debate about what is important for the nation, including what is best for the nation's children" (Griffin, 1999). So racial and cultural dialogue about teachers and their pedagogy practices remains unexamined because insufficient attention is given to the special historical, social, economic, and political roles that racial identity plays in the United States. Ladson-Billings suggests a culturally relevant pedagogy to teaching that challenges some teachers' intrinsic assumptions that "culture is what other people have; what we have is truth" (p. 131). She writes,

Specifically, culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These cultural referents are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right (pp.17-18).

Ladson-Billings' grounded theory of culturally relevant teaching has implications for African American students' education as well as teachers' educations. Lisa Delpit (1995) perceives culturally relevant teaching as critical for explaining the culture of power to all teachers who must engage all students and engage them with learning content as well. The culture of power that she speaks of relates to linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self, namely is ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting (p.25) Delpit addresses the fundamental issue of power in communicating across cultures in education because whose voice gets to be heard determines the quality and value of teaching and learning for all students.

Currently, more teacher educators are linking racial identity development to teachers' educational practices as the starting point to combine the analytical and experiential ways of knowing (Delpit, 1988, Sleeter, 1993; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Foster, 1997; Lawrence, 1997; McIntyre, 1997; Tatum, 1997;). Teachers' racial identity most often defines their culturally relevant approach to their teaching and learning practices (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Lisa Delpit (1988) and Gloria Ladson-Billing's (1994) cultural relevant approach to teaching African-American students illustrates that Black and White teachers were successful because they took the time to know their students, reflect on their teaching practices, and question "the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society" (Ladson-Billings, 1994 p. 128). They also taught their students to do the same. Teaching for social justice challenges teachers "to educate as the practice for freedom" (hooks, 1994). Bell Hooks (1994), in *Teaching to Transgress*, challenges teacher educators to not merely share information but also,

share in the intellectual growth of prospective teachers to struggle against all forms of oppression.

Conclusion

The teaching practices employed by educators today are influenced and shaped by their racial identity. Teachers' world-views about race are constructed out of their life experiences and vested interests. Teachers who do not believe they have a racial identity or identify as a member of a racial group tend to deny the existence of racial differences and demonstrate a lack of knowledge and understanding of the societal construct of race and racial identity. Teachers' racial identity is connected to the social power differential and structural inequalities that place people of color at a disadvantage.

A common language that creates tension in a race-conscious manner binds teachers' racial categorization and racial identity. Common language becomes coded when words and actions are used to mean something different. White teachers to racially identify themselves most often use the words "American" and "human". These terms allow some White teachers to remain unconscious to the systematic advantages they have based on their skin color. Therefore, in the context of racial identity development "American" and "human being" are coded words for Whiteness. In the context of Whiteness, an "American" identity denies racial and ethnic identities and the humanity of others.

Those teachers whose teaching practices embrace the culturally specific values and beliefs of whiteness remove racial differences from the discourse and minimize the

way race shapes and influences all students' lives. Whites have better access to housing, schools, employment, and other social services that lead to a better quality of life. People of color are placed in subordinate roles and whiteness becomes the norm by which all others are measured. Therefore, the way teachers teach is grounded in culturally relevant practices. Culturally relevant teaching practices challenge teachers to reflect on ways that their racial identity influences and shapes their teaching practices. As teachers assess their racial behaviors, attitudes, and actions when teaching all students, they need to pay attention to the power differential and structural inequalities that separate them from their students and students' learning.

In this research study, the literature reviewed provided the framework for asking the teacher participants to recall times when they first became aware of racial differences; to consider the importance of racial identities to teaching practices; to define how they racially identify themselves; to describe their teaching practices; to describe their philosophy of education and what they needed to help them understand about racial identity and racial issues in their teaching practices.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This research study is a phenomenological investigation of what three Black and three White women who are elementary and middle school teachers in the Boston Public Schools think about their racial identities in the context of their teaching practices. Phenomenology research is the study of lived experience (van Manen, 1990).

Max van Manen (1990) contends,

To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the life world, and yet remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal (p.18).

From this point of view, van Manen's perspective on phenomenology research informs this study as a methodology but not as the model. It provides a way to make meaning of the

human world as we find it in all its variegated aspects. . .[and] finds its point of departure in the situation, for purpose of analysis, description, and interpretation,[and] functions as an exemplary nodal points of meanings that are embedded in this situation (van Manen, 1990, p.18).

In this study phenomenology research "aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (van Manen, 1990 p.9) within a racialized society. It studies the essence of a phenomenon, in this case, racial identity. As a result of the United States' racial legislative policies, practices, and beliefs, the racial identity of teachers and students do shape their everyday experiences. It is teachers' levels of awareness, response, and reaction to racial issues in their personal lives that determine how they perceive their own racial identity in teaching and learning.

Therefore, the question this research seeks to examine is whether teachers believe there is a connection between their racial identity and their teaching practices. This is significant because the school-age population is becoming more multi-cultural and multi-ethnic in makeup, but its teaching force reflects a trend in the opposite direction (Haselkorn & Calkins, 2000).

The phenomenological research is particularly appealing to this study in teacher education because "it tries to understand the phenomena of education by maintaining a view of pedagogy as an expression of the whole" (van Manen, 1990, p.7). Teaching does not begin in schools. What people learn about themselves and others begin at home and in their communities. Schools reinforce, expand, or change what they believe about themselves and others. So the teacher participants were asked to reflect upon their first awareness of racial differences as their point of becoming cognizant of the "lived quality and significance" of their racial identity within the context of their families and schools (van Manen, 1990, p.10). As they think while speaking they could gain a deeper understanding and interpretation of their lived experiences and how those experiences influenced and shaped their teaching practices.

The Setting and Sample

The six female teachers, three Black and three White, were drawn from two Boston public elementary and middle schools. The study was limited to female teachers for two reasons. First, teachers' demographics indicate that women continue to dominate the elementary and middle school classrooms, White women in particular. The second reason comes from a quote attributed to the nineteenth century historian

Martin Delaney, “no people are elevated above the condition of their females” (cited in Martin & Martin, 1985). White women have a history of struggling for an education as well as providing an education for others to achieve equality. More often their resistance to oppression focuses on gender and class differences. Delaney was arguing for the education of Black women to assist in the struggle for the advancement of Black people. Many Black women did assume major roles in the education of Black children, thus advancing the progress of Black people (i.e., Ruby Middleton Forsythe; Septima Clark; Fannie Jackson Coppin). Teaching for Black women “reflected and encouraged social responsibility” (Shaw, 1996). Therefore, the decrease in the number of Black women in the classrooms, particularly in large urban schools, is a major concern. Their lived experiences in a racialized society offers a philosophy of education and Black women’s ways of knowing that can contribute to teaching and learning for all students.

Most Black and White teachers’ teaching practices demonstrate a concern for children’s social and emotional needs. Kindergartens to eighth grade teachers are more student-centered in their approach to teaching and learning. These teachers are trained to look after the social and emotional development of children as well as their intellectual development. As such, then teachers often try to create learning environments that direct, instruct, drill, and nurture children to become confident learners. For these reasons, the teacher participants were chosen for this study for their experiences in teaching kindergarten, first, second, and eighth grade. Although eighth grade teachers are more subjects specific, they tend to continue to pay attention to children’s social and emotional needs.

The Boston Public Schools was chosen for two reasons. One, it is typical of other urban districts with large populations of students-of-color and two, it required the intervention of the federal courts to force steps designed to desegregate its public schools. The federal district court ordered busing and other remedies to achieve "racially balanced" schools. The de facto segregated public schools in Boston were found to provide Black children with an unequal and inferior education. In June 1974, the United States District Court found "that the Boston School Committee had deliberately segregated the public schools" (Fraser, Allen & Barnes, 1979, p.109). After an effort of more than twenty years to integrate the Boston schools many, if not most schools are still racially segregated in 2000 - i.e. predominately African American, White, or Hispanic. See chart below.

Table 1

Estimated 84,000 school age children living in Boston.	
21,000 (25%) do not attend BPS	
White	50%
Black	39%
Hispanic	8%
Asian	3%

Students who do not attend the BPS
 15,4000 go to private & parochial
 3,000 go to suburban schools through METCO
 1,800 go to public charter schools
 800 go to private special ed. school

*Estimate, based on most recent available data

The Boston Public Schools facts and figures² show that an estimated eighty-four-thousand school-age children lived in Boston during the FY99 school year. Twenty-one

²Boston Pubic Schools. (2000, August 8). Facts & Figures. School Assignment. [WWW document]. URL <http://www.boston.k12.ma.us/bps/bpsglance.asp>

thousand did not attend Boston Public schools. Fifty percent of those students are White and thirty-nine percent are Black.

Figure two shows the percentage of teachers, administrators, and students by race/ethnicity in the Boston schools.

Figure 2

Student & Staff Demographics FY99

Race	Student	Teachers	Administrators
Black	49%	26%	32%
White	15%	61%	55%
Hispanics	27%	9%	9%
Asian	9%	4%	4%
American Indian	<1%		

In 1999, the School Committee continued to struggle with ways to manage the issue of race in school assignments through a “controlled choice” plan established in 1987. The “controlled choice” plan divided the city into three zones -North, East, and West- for K-8 assignments and assigned students within their residential zone based on choice “within racial guidelines”. In November 1999, in response to a parent’s legal challenge, the School Committee voted to drop race-based school assignments and “approved a plan that maintains the three zones, that sets aside 50% of a school’s seats for students in its “walk zone”, and gives priority for the remaining seats to applicants who do not live in the walk zone of any school³.” This plan is intended to remove the

³Boston Public Schools. (2000, August 8). Facts & Figures. School Assignment. [WWW document]. URL <http://www.boston.k12.ma.us/bps/bpsglance.asp>

issue of race when assigning students to schools. Yet, the zones manifest the racial stratification that has historically defined the racially and ethnically diverse communities in Boston.

The data for this study was collected between June and December of 1999. This is significant because the School Committee voted in November 1999 to end race-based school assignments, a current event that could influence the teachers' level of consciousness of race and racial issues within their schools, zones, and district.

The rationale for including Black and White teachers only in this study rather than other racial and ethnic groups is due to the history of racial segregation in Boston. The focus of the court case was on the disparity in educational opportunities between Black and White children. Selecting teachers over thirty years of age and with more than four years of teaching experience in Boston allowed this study to determine if current events such as the school choice plans, busing, the Women's Movement, or the Civil Rights Movement had raised their consciousness of race and racial identity in school settings.

The proposal for this study was presented to a number of people in the school district. They were asked to nominate teachers to participate (i.e., teachers, administrators, and individuals who worked with Boston schools) in this project that examines the connections between teachers' racial identities and their teaching practices.

Eighteen teachers were recommended and eight teachers met all of the above criteria. The eight teachers were contacted by letter and followed up by telephone. Two did not respond. Each teacher participant was sent a detailed statement that described the study and a consent form. (Appendix 1). This communication was followed by a

telephone call to respond to their questions or concerns about the study and to schedule the first of two interviews. Each teacher was interviewed twice and both interviews lasted for sixty minutes. The interviews were conducted in the teachers' classrooms with one exception due to a schedule conflict. In several cases, the teacher participants were aware of the identity of other participants because they worked in the same building. However, they were encouraged not to discuss the study, and they were assured that the researcher's information would not be shared. The chart below gives a brief profile of each teacher participant.

	Black Teachers			White Teachers		
	Starr	Gloria	Diane	Candy	Dorothy	Rebecca
Age	35-41	50+	50+	30-35	50+	30-35
Grade	K	8 th	K/1	K	8 th	1 st
BPS Teacher	6	20+	35	4	6	5
Years Teaching	17	20+	35	8	6	5

Interviews

The first interview focused on the teacher participants' personal and racial backgrounds; educational experiences that prepared them for teaching; racial awareness; philosophy of education; description of their classrooms, and their teaching practices. An observation of their classroom practices followed the first interview. The observation focused on their interactional patterns, presentation of a lesson, and pedagogy i.e., their ways of talking, teaching, and interacting with students as well as

their curricula (Delpit, 1995). The purpose of the observation was to examine the congruence between what they said they do in the classroom and what they actually do. (Observation Protocol Appendix 2)

The second interview focused on the teacher participants' knowledge of the racial climate of the school district, the school's local community, and school building, and to discuss any steps the teachers had taken through professional development to raise their racial awareness. (Interview Questions Appendix 3) This second interview provided an opportunity to clarify any areas that raised questions or were not in agreement with their action observed in their classrooms.

Data Analysis

The researcher interviewed all six teacher participants and tape recorded all of them with the exception of one teacher's first interview because the recorder did not work. Notes were taken and questions were asked and tape-recorded during the second interview to clarify any concerns raised while transcribing the notes. All the tapes were transcribed by a professional transcriber and imported in NUD*IST/NVIVO a qualitative research computer software. NVivo was used to identify the major themes that emerged from the interviews and classroom observations. The software allowed the researcher to sort the data and arrange it in thematic categories in order to compare response patterns within and between Black and White teachers. The sorting and arrangement of the data was consistent with the order of the interviews to provide a profile of each teacher. The data were the exact words of each teacher.

The observations were recorded in the Observation Protocol log. The log sheet contained student demographic information and a description of the classroom on the front and the back was divided into three columns. The left-hand column contained words, actions, and gestures the teachers made when interacting with students; the middle column contained instructional routine of the teachers; and the third column contained the teachers' explanation of what happens in their classrooms. For example, a teacher reported that she maintained a literacy-based classroom. The researcher recorded her statement and wrote posters, labels, and signs on the walls, tables, and objects. The observation protocol logs contained no evaluation or interpretation of the teachers' words, actions, and gestures. In an observation memo the researcher summarized what was observed and it became a part of the textual data imported in NU*DIST/NVIVO qualitative analysis software to make sense of the thematic strands.

Chapter 4

The Beliefs and Voices of Teachers

In this chapter, three Black and three White teachers describe their life experiences that led to their decisions to teach, their first awareness of racial differences, the construct of their racial and ethnic identities, and their teaching practices. The teachers recalled events and social conditions within their families, communities, and schools that shaped those life experiences. The teachers' stories of their school experiences also include details about their teacher training programs and professional development activities. Teacher participants' lived experiences reveal how they know what they know about racial differences and teaching practices. What the teacher participants recalled and described about their lived experiences is a foundation on which to base an analysis of how they acquire knowledge about racialization in their personal and professional lives. "Racialization" is an official practice of emphasizing physical attributes as a means to set people apart and to assign them to racial groups that are projected as real, and thereby becomes the basis for analyzing all social relations (Webster, 1992). The teachers' beliefs about racial differences and teaching are presented in their own words to demonstrate how they racially classify themselves, their experiences, motives, and behaviors. It is through their beliefs that they provide a way to understand the connections between their racial identity and their teaching practices.

Commonalities and Differences

The Black and White teachers shared some commonalities in their life experiences and teaching practices that provide insight into how racial classification shaped how they perceived themselves and others. First all teacher participants received positive support and encouragement from their families. They were influenced by positive experiences with their own teachers and grew up in segregated and separated communities. All teacher participants believed that all children could learn. However, the essence of what that means differs between the Black and White teachers. All teacher participants believed their teacher education programs had provided them with the theories and techniques of teaching, but they felt that the teacher education programs did not prepare them to deal with the diversity of students living in a racialized society.

The following narratives of teacher participants are used to illustrate these commonalities as well as the differing responses between the Black and White teachers. The discussions will first focus on the three Black teachers: Starr Bright, Gloria Scott, and Diane Wilder and then turn to the three white teachers: Candy Swift, Dorothy Reed, and Rebecca Century.

The Teacher Participants

Black Teachers

Starr Bright

Starr, a kindergarten teacher in her late 30's, racially and ethnically identifies and describes herself as,

"a fifth generation Black Boston Brahmin. I guess I am African American. I thought I was Black. My birth certificate says I am colored". Exhaling deeply, "I was born in Boston".

The term, a Black Brahmin, refers to a long-established upper middle class family whose "ancestors were often either free Negroes during slavery or privileged slaves (house slaves or artisans instead of field slaves), who often inherited money or property, or were given a modicum of education by their masters" (Billingsley, 1968, p.124). Starr attributes her "Brahmin" identity to her father's long-established Boston's *"Native American and Caucasian to African-American and Caucasian to just totally African-American"* heritage. Yet, as a fifth generation Black Bostonian she is racialized as *"colored"*.

Starr's mother worked as middle manager in a hospital and had *"some weight behind her"* as a community activist. Her parents' social status in the community gave her and her brother a head start in life. Starr believed there were no doubts in her parents' minds that their children would succeed in school, go to college, and have successful careers. Her parents prepared Starr to answered the call to teach as a little girl when they brought her *"chalk and a chalk board."*

My mom used to bring home paper, pencils, and crayons from work. I just started doing it. Lining up the dolls and playing school everyday. That was it. I just kept going with it.

Starr's teaching experience spans seventeen years in urban, suburban, and parochial schools, but it was her nursery school experience that shaped and influenced her teaching practices. She reminisces:

I was four or five. I loved my nursery school teacher, Mrs. Jones. She had a big, big one family house. Big garden out front, playground, sandbox, a little shed in the back, and a little garden for us. She was so nice to me. She was wonderful. I

could do no wrong there. She made learning just great! I went to a little kindergarten in the public school but didn't like it.

The most meaningful part of Starr's pre-service teaching experience was student teaching. She expressed this sentiment because the teaching and learning theories in the college classrooms, and the reality of educating the population of students she worked with were not congruent. She recalled her learning experiences and the practices of her nursery school teacher that struck a balance between play and teaching which made learning fun.

I can actually say college really didn't prepare me. Yes, I learned about psychology and child development. I knew that school should be like what happened in nursery school and not what happened in public school. Most of my preparation came from all different kinds of experiences during my student teaching practicum.

Starr's student teaching experiences were in rural and urban schools:

I wanted to stay in western Massachusetts. I wanted to work with a third of the population and that is what I did. I worked mostly with Hispanic students which was a real good experience and where most of my preparation came from.

Starr brought to her teaching practices lessons learned from how she "was raised":

"My family did Efficacy before Jeff Howard came along. My mother, aunts, and uncles use to say, 'Get in here! Sit down! Yes, you can do it! But, if you can't do it we're going to find out why and we are going to find somebody else who can help you do it. You will succeed.' They were efficacy. You go to school, do your homework, and then you apply to college. You don't even think about not applying to college because you are going."

Jeff Howard, a Social Psychologist, founder of the Efficacy Institute, focuses on the academic achievement of students through the application of effective, direct, and explicit discipline and teaching practices. Starr believed that her family's attitudes

toward education and discipline were effective child-rearing practices; therefore she carried those lessons learned at home into her classroom practices. She said she often told her students:

You come to school to learn. So don't even think you are coming in here to do something different. You are coming here to learn. Your parents send you here because they want you to learn. I am not the babysitter. I am the teacher. I am not your friend. I am not your cousin. I am not!

Starr's familial and educational background strongly influences her philosophy of teaching, namely that *"all children can learn and everybody has something to contribute."* She assures her students they *"can learn anything."* They just need to tell her where they *"want to go,"* and she will push them there.

You just have to find where their interest points are, and they can pick it up and run with it. They have to learn that somebody will be there to support them; help them know and learn the things that they want to know.

When Starr was asked if the teacher's racial identity was important to her teaching practices, she said:

I don't know. I mean I think after teaching with some really good teachers and reading Dreamkeepers, if your heart is in it, it does not matter what color you are. If you care about your students you care about your profession. It is not to say you are going to be color-blind because you do know that you need to deal with the population of students you have in front of you. There are certain ways that you address and you speak to children of color and certain ways they're all going to respond. And as soon as you find that niche you can have them eating out of your hands. They will do anything for you. I have seen it.

Starr recalled a time when a teacher educator came to her classroom to help her implement a reading program. Starr saw the woman *"work magic"* with her kindergartners. It is interesting to note that Starr did not racially or ethnically identify the consultant.

I watched her do oral storytelling. She would bring up stuff and had the kids eating out of her hand. So, it did not matter to them that it wasn't me. It's just her style was good and she had a good rapport with children. She knew what to do. She knew what young children liked. She just had the gum to make it work.

Starr paused for five second thinking more deeply about the connections between a teacher's racial identity and her teaching practices. Slowly she began to talk:

If you really love what you're doing and you really care about the students that you teach, you are going to try and find out what makes them comfortable, what makes them learn best.

Starr shared a story about a field trip when she was a camp fire girl. This story was also about her first awareness of racial differences when she experienced a White adult who did not care to make the children feel comfortable and safe.

I must have been about seven and was a Camp Fire Girl. The leader was an old White woman; she must have been about sixty something. She thought she was saving the world. I use to ask my mother why the woman say the things she said, like "You girls! We will do this and you girls will do that". My mother would explain to me the woman was old and did not communicate things well.

However, it was the behavior of the Camp Fire leader that made Starr "so angry" and provoked her mother "to say a lot...stuff" that Starr said she could not "repeat." Once again, Starr does not identify the racial identity of the other Camp Fire girls on the field trip.

It was ten girls and she was taking us on a Field trip to City Point. This was before City Point had its issues. She said, 'Bring money, do this, do that. I will get you there and we will come back together'. When we were coming back she said, 'I'm not paying your fare'. 'What do you mean; you're not paying my fare. We spent all our money. We don't have any more money', I said. The fare was only a dime, but I didn't even have a dime. This meant I could not call my mother.

The girls got on a bus and jumped off when they reached Massachusetts Avenue. Starr had to walk about four miles from Mass Avenue to Grove Hall.

I was so angry that this woman had done that to me and the other girls. I can remember walking and walking and walking. It was hot. And I knew I needed to get home before my mother got out of work. Well, you know! I didn't go back to Camp Fire Girls after that.

Although Starr did not know if a teacher's racial identity was important to her teaching practices, she did know that she wanted more professional development that addressed *"violence in schools and the peaceable discipline in the peaceable classroom"* as well as an *"anti-racist program."*

Summary

Starr's educational belief that children can do anything clearly stems from her parents telling her the same thing as a child. Since her parents' teachings worked for her, she believes that it will work for her students if effectively applied. She believes that all children can learn, and they all have something to contribute to their respective learning environments.

Starr also learned from her parents that it is ok to ask difficult questions because they provided her with answers or directed her to the appropriate places for the answers. Learning to ask questions to get answers allowed Starr to take risks in learning about things she did not know and to be open minded when experiencing something different. Her nursery school teacher and parents laid the foundation for her to feel safe and comfortable in asking questions that kept learning interesting and fun.

When Starr was seven years old her awareness of racial differences was heightened by her exposure to the racist attitudes and behaviors of an older White

woman who seemed to talk negatively to the Black girls. Starr had learned from her parents to get along with all people, do what is fair and right, but not to be color-blind. So, she turned to her mother to provide answers for the differential treatment she received from the older White woman. Her mother explained the racial differences and linked the behavior also to age and poor communication skills.

Starr's teaching strategies acknowledge, accept, and respect individual differences. Her personal experiences of school beyond her family also contributed to her teaching ideals, but to a lesser extent. Her teacher education program did not address race in education or utilize her knowledge and experiences of living in a racialized world. However, she was cognizant of the different ways that race and image played a role in teaching and learning.

Gloria Scott

Gloria is an eighth grade middle school teacher in a self-contained "*learning adaptive behavior*" classroom. This special education classroom accommodated students who had behavior problems that interfered with their learning. Gloria perceives her students as bright young girls whose life experiences interfere with learning, and the "*plantation*" like schools does not teach them to learn the skills they need to effect changes in their own lives.

Gloria is over fifty years of age, a "*native Bostonian a Boston Bean, homegrown*" and identifies as an "*original woman*". Gloria acknowledges, "*It is not racism that bothers*" her, "*it is the lack of respect for identity. We are the original people of the earth. Your identity and your originality is who you are.*" Gloria points first to me and then to

herself as she talks about *"the original people."* She then announced that, *"I am not Black."* She believes that *"black"* is a racial *"label"* and a *"political"* construct. Gloria uses the terms Black, White, Asian, and Latino as racial classification to politicalize the *"structure of the building"* in which ninety-five percent of the Black teachers are *"isolated"* in special education classrooms with Black children and the White teachers are with the White children in advanced and academic gifted classrooms.

Gloria has taught for almost thirty years in two Boston Public middle schools and feels *"wonderfully blessed"* in her professional and personal careers because *"they are one and the same."* She started teaching *"professionally"* at ten years of age.

I was about ten. My first job was in an after school program at my church teaching children arts and crafts. I was just a little old teacher. I always had my little bag. And I still had to do my homework because my mother was no joke.

Even in high school Gloria *"tutored pre-med students in Latin"* because she was *"answering the call"* to teach.

Yes, ma'am. I always knew teaching was my gift. I always built my life around it. I knew that's what I wanted to do and become.

Gloria *"was extremely fortunate"* to have *"excellent teachers throughout [her] life"* and *"rigorous preparation"* that carried her straight through college. Most of her teachers were White. Whenever Gloria and her parents sensed that the teachers had low expectations of her they confronted them. Her parents wanted the teachers to provide Gloria with the academic skills she needed to be professionally successful.

Ok, I was twenty-one years old. I had a degree. I had been teaching for ten years. So, I had a resume. I was very, very fortunate to be able to work in the community and church programs as a tutor. I worked with different organizations. I worked with the NAACP, traveled, and just built

up my repertoire of teaching skills. The people I met were incredible. So, that's how I started teaching.

Gloria's family was the ***"first and foremost"*** influence in her life. Her father was a minister and her mother worked at home. She learned from her parents ***"at the very, very beginning, to accept each day as a blessing and make the most of it"*** Gloria knew they believed education was just as important as their beliefs in the family, church, and community.

And you must make the most of it. I can hear my mother's voice here. I know that everything she did was with that in mind. I have to instill it in my family that 'every day, nothing is promised to you. You have to make the best of it because it was given to you'.

Gloria refers to her students as ***"my children"***, ***"my kids"*** and ***"my little ole banana puddings"*** because she perceives her students as part of her family. They are ***"part of the community"*** that she has ***"learned how to fight for"*** because she knows the limits imposed on them by racial policies and practices are ***"rooted in racism."*** Gloria accepted as part of her social responsibility the roles of parent, advocate, and role model to teach children how to identify the issues that will require them to ***"fight the battles"*** for social justices.

I have some wonderful friends, wonderful family. I have some good enemies too, who taught me also how to fight the battles that had to be waged in the name of righteousness and in the name of children. OK? Because you have to fight for that. I've had some awesome adversaries and I became one. Oh, yes, ma'am. I'll fight for my kids.

Gloria's first day of school as a child was the beginning of her racial consciousness.

My first teacher in school was probably the first White person I had ever seen other than the little guy who lived down the street. I lived in the Black community. Only White people we saw were the little man. The little man

who had the pharmacy and the little meat market men, they were neighborhood people, business people.

Since Gloria “*didn’t have any dealing with*” White people outside of her community she “*didn’t know what to do*” with the White teacher. Furthermore, she did not have to deal with the White teacher alone because her parents responded immediately to the first call from the teacher to address Gloria’s first cross-cultural experience.

I didn’t see any White people at church; I didn’t see any White people at the library. So when I went to school, my little first day of school, I didn’t know what to do with this lady sitting up in here. She talked funny. I busted out laughing. She called my mother the first day of school. I wasn’t laughing at her. She was all prim and her little perm and stuff. That was my first time and we weren’t really conscious of it. We just had not been around White people.

Gloria begins her story about her first awareness of racial consciousness by describing her own reactions to the White teacher. When her reactions created “a *problem*” for the teacher and the teacher involves her parents she shifts from the “I” to “we”. The “we” are the other students who she believes are having a similar reaction to the presence of a White teacher. Gloria’s family experiences and community experiences reinforce her belief in the success of the group rather than the individual.

Mrs. Bellow was very rigid and it was very, very strange. We all knew how to read. She was giving us little jump Spot jump. Oh, no baby! We could read. Ok? Give us books to read. She was just adamant that ‘You don’t how to read.’ Yes, we do. We know how to read! We know how to read! We had our little library; we knew how to read because we went to Sunday school, Saturday school, and Junior Missionaries. We knew how to read and pray. My mother came right on up there and said, “Oh, no! Oh, no, no, no. If there’s a problem, you call me. But don’t tell her she can’t read. She reads. She is a reader.” And all the parents that were there were all my mother’s little friends. My daddy was there, too. Because my daddy was a minister.

Gloria's family and community modeled how she learned to "*carry herself*" and to be conscious of "*racial problems*" that would deflect her from her goals. Gloria acquired the academic credentials and professional experiences and skills required to do the work without assimilating and accommodating cultural values and norms that did not reflect what she learned at home. It is interesting to note how Gloria demonstrates the duality of living in a racialized society without assimilating. She knowingly switches between "standard" English and "Ebonics."

I don't have too many racial problems because that's not just the way I carry myself. I came here academically in tuned my credentials are intact. I wasn't coming shukin' and jivin' talking about, 'giv' me this!' No! No! No! No! No. I have had minimal racial incidents. I came qualified but dignified. The racial incidents I have had has been major and not to be repeated.

Gloria talked about racial identity as being important to teaching practices because "*you can't separate them. You can't separate them unless you are going to pretend to be something that you're not.*"

If you separate it and make being a teacher one thing being Black something else then you have a problem with who you are. And I don't separate it. This is what you see is what you get. I teach my children who I am. You are who you are. The whole package. There is not another one like you in the whole wide world. Just look at all the people He created, just like that. (She snaps her fingers.) And all of you (her students) are just as different and just as crazy as you can be. So, sit on down here and get your homework out. And they do it.

Gloria believes the Boston School system is deteriorating because some teachers have separated their professional identities from their personal identities. Gloria also believes that the school system is oppressive to all children, most particularly, Black children and Latino children. She also acknowledges that it is equally

oppressive for Black teachers. It forces them to create a persona for the classroom.

Gloria resists doing so:

I can't separate. I can't separate. Some people do and I know that they do. That's probably why the Boston system has...it's deteriorating. It use to be a fine, fine system. We use to have excellent...we still do. We have some excellent teachers here because they know that if they leave our children will suffer. They know that! But it is hard to stay here because sometimes you get...It's not even burnout. It's just oppressive to work in a system where you know that they don't want you and you have to fight and get them off your kids.

Gloria's beliefs about life frame her philosophy of education and teaching practices.

Love to learn, learn to love. Here is something I say People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. And that is how I feel about life, about everything. That's in my heart and the way I deal with people. You're supposed to have an effect on everybody's life that you meet. That's an old Indian way of life. That everyone's life you touch, you take that with you. Whether it's good or bad, there's going to be some good out of it. Every single life you touch becomes part of who you are.

This is important to Gloria because she sees schools as “complicating” and “confusing” the “education” of Black and White children.

People complicate things. Education has become complicated, and kids are confused. That's why there is so much violence and so many tragic things happening to our children. People lie to them. They don't tell them what's really important in this life. We're going to lose a whole generation to violence, to death. And we need them. That's not a Black thing because White family structures are falling apart too. And where do they look. White youth are finding that their parents have been lying to them. They've taught them to be prejudiced based on what?

Gloria tries to take care of some of the emotional needs and stresses that the children bring with them into the classroom issues that interfere with learning. So she has the students take “deep breaths” which mean they take a few minutes to talk and then they “rock and roll.” Rock and roll means teaching begins.

I demand discipline. I demand it! I absolutely demand it! I demand they stop talking when I am talking. That they listen when I say listen.

Gloria understands what her students need to be academically successful and demands that they do nothing less than their best.

The school system believes in key questions. That you have to have key questions and you ask those key questions for the children to answer. I believe the opposite is true. I want mines to know how to ask a good question. We talk math and everyone goes to the board. ‘You can’t sit down until you ask me a good question.’ I am not worried about them answering a good question; I want them to be able to ask one.

Summary

Gloria Scott regards teaching as a spiritually based experience and gift, one that she started using early in life with the support and encouragement of her family and community. Many of her teaching strategies are borrowed from lessons her parents taught her. In addition, her approach to teaching and learning reflects her concern for all students. Gloria recognizes and acknowledges racial oppression and the social, political, and structural inequalities in schools. She accepts the responsibility of teaching as “no joke” and strives to provide her students with the skills and content knowledge they need to make wise, informed life-decisions that best serve their interest academically, socially, and spiritually. Gloria recognizes that the racial classification of people denies the originality of each person and that the racial identity of the teacher does influence her teaching practices.

Gloria’s first experiences with White people manifest themselves as culture clashes. Her personal experiences within the Black community combined with her family’s teaching about the values of human life transcend the limitations of a racial

identity. Gloria values and “*studies*” any life that “*moves*.” For her, education was not limited to the walls of a school building.

Gloria acknowledges that teacher training provided her with a source of knowledge that prepared her to be a good teacher at twenty-one. However, the teacher education program did not, nor have the professional development activities offered by the schools, in which she worked and now teaches, addressed race and education as a way to understand and respect the identity of all people. Gloria’s quest for knowledge provided her with opportunities to travel to Indian reservations, museums, across the United States, and other countries seeking answers to “good questions”.

Diane Wilder

Diane teaches a combined Kindergarten and first grade classes and she is an “*adult educator*” with more than thirty years of teaching experience at both the elementary and college levels. She was born in Georgia more than fifty years ago and had to ride a school bus “*31 miles every day*” to attend an all Black high school. She did not “*remember*” how early she had to get up to catch the bus that stopped in front of her house.

In spite of the long bus rides, Diane “*enjoyed*” school because of her Black teachers. In fact, she became a teacher because of her friendships with her teachers.

I think that along with having very good teachers, my teachers were my friends. It was very interesting because my teachers actually were members of my church so they were my family friends. They were people I knew. I actually liked them...

In a segregated school system Diane's teachers were role models who looked like her, knew her, and shared her cultural beliefs and traditions. Diane attended the *"only Black high school in the county"* and as a senior she was given an opportunity to be a substitute teacher in an elementary school for a week, with pay. Substitute teaching and her *"personal contacts"* with her elementary and high school teachers influenced her decision to teach.

When I was a senior in high school, I had an opportunity to do substitute teaching because all the elementary teachers were sick with the flu. The principal of the elementary school called the high school because we were the only Black high school in the county. He asked if they could send the Future Teachers of America people down to sub because all the teachers were out at the elementary school. I did it for a week. I enjoyed it. My mom was very upset because I got a paycheck. She thought I was in school she didn't know I was down there working. I enjoyed it. I really did because before that I thought I wanted to be a nurse. That was my first experience in a classroom and it was very positive.

Diane attended a Black college and majored in elementary education. Diane maintains that she had a *"horrible"* student teaching experience. She was sick during most of her student teaching experience, but she had a *"wonderful cooperative teacher who helped [her] through everything"*. The support of the teacher educator confirmed for Diane that she *"wanted to teach."* Diane does not indicate if her cooperative teacher is Black or White. However, when Diane moved to Boston after college she asked herself, *'Do I want to do this? Do I want to do this?'* The question was raised not because of her positive substitute teaching experience rather because of her negative student teaching experience.

Diane had friends in Boston and the Black community in which she lived, who *"protected"* and *"convinced"* her to do what she enjoyed, teaching.

It was a cab driver, a friend of mine. They all wanted to protect me because I was this college girl. They knew me from the summer. He actually didn't do any fares that night because he spent until 1 a.m. convincing me that I should teach. Actually he took me by the school so I could see it. It was an old school. The school no longer exists. I said, 'I am going to teach in that!' Another friend who was protecting me also decided he would drive me the first day.

During Diane's first teaching experience in Boston she "bonded" with her 36 elementary boys, another beginning teacher, and a "master teacher who would come in and help". So, it wasn't like she was "always alone with the students" in an all boys' Boston Public School. Again, Diane did not provide a racial profile of the students and teachers

The support of the master teacher at the all boys' school and later the support of the principal at the next school in which Diane taught, allowed her to be an "innovative" teacher. Diane described teaching strategies, which directed students' learning by letting her students sit on "rugs on the floor, work in groups, and have a lot to do with their own learning long before opened education".

I like a very independent class. I like my children to be able to function without me. I just think it prepares a child better to be an independent learner. That's something I haven't changed from. I try to work with children in very small groups. My children are reading where they are supposed to be.

Diane acknowledges she is changing her way of interacting with Black parents when thinking about the way her racial identity influences her teaching practices.

In the last say five or six years I realize how Minority children in Boston are so below everybody else. I have started to really think about being forceful. I've been a little more forceful with their parents in saying, "You have to help this child. You!" And I have also done it from an identity point. "We have to help these children. We can't let them continue to not do". I would in a way try to extend myself to minority parents, Black parents. But I did put that special emphasis on "we" and "you" as a Black parent.

Diane looked at the standardized test scores of her students and realized there was an achievement gap between the Black children and White. Though she believed that her teaching strategies were effective, she reached out to the Black parents as potential allies and resources to help the children experience academic success. However, Diane “really” doesn’t think a teacher’s racial identity is important to her teaching practice.

I really don't. I think what is important to her teaching practice is that she enjoys children. Diverse children if she enjoys teaching. I know Afro-American teachers who don't like to teach White children. This year I had one White child in my room and I am very conscious of it because I've worked with METCO children, talked with them and heard how they feel isolated. I know how they feel isolated. So I tried all I could to include this child, to make sure this child felt comfortable. As a matter of fact, I made a point that there should have been two.

Although Diane does not think that the teacher’s racial identity matters she was able to identify with the feelings of isolation experienced by the Black students in METCO. METCO is a voluntary bussing plan that buses Black, Latino, and Asian children from Boston’s inner city communities to suburban schools. Diane is able to empathize with the White child’s feelings of isolation because she had observed those same feelings in the Black children.

Diane teaches all her students to be proud of who they are because she learned from her father that no matter what people call you it does not matter. So when Diane was asked her racial identity she replied.

What do I consider as my racial identity? I usually put African American. If there is a thing that says Black, I'll check it off. I don't write anything in. I would think of my dad who never did. He always felt colored was a good description because that's what he grew up with. I'll never forget when I mentioned something about the book, I think it's something like 'When We Were Colored'. He said, "When we were colored?! We're still colored". So

I don't have any problems. If somebody calls me African American, I don't get upset. If they call me Afro-American I don't get upset. If they call me Black, I don't get upset. If they call me Negro I don't get upset. Even if they use a racial slur, I don't get upset. I don't get upset because I grew up in Georgia where I knew people had problems with my color. So it doesn't bother me.

Diane learned from her father to be “proud” and comfortable in her “environment”. Diane is confident about who she is as a Black woman because she was “taught at an all Black school.” These positive racial messages learned from her father and reinforced in her community and school have influenced her belief about teaching.

I believe that all people can learn. All people because I've taught adult basic education for twenty years. I think that all people can learn, providing there is a setting, the environment, and someone there to direct their learning. I feel that a lot of learning is self-directed. But a person or a child has to be taught to do this type of self-directing. You have to give them things that make them want to learn. I feel that I try to do this. I try to look at the curriculum I have to teach and make it so that kids will enjoy doing it and I will enjoy teaching it.

Summary

Diane Wilder grew up in the South and learned from her father that how others see you is not as important as how you see yourself. His teachings of empowerment have become an integral part of her teaching strategies. Her father's influence is manifested when she teaches students to be independent learners, to be tolerant of differences, and to have self-pride. Her human relations approach (Sleeter & Grant, 1999) helps her to develop teaching strategies that enable students to recognize their common humanity while acquiring the academic skills to make wise and well informed-decisions.

Diane's sense of racial empowerment was deeply rooted in her mind because she perceived her life experiences of growing up, living in, and attending an all Black

school and college to be the norm. The people who protected, supported, and encouraged her validated this normalcy from her home life to her school life led her to believe that what people say about you doesn't matter. What mattered to her was that her students had the same kind of personal contact and support to be independent learners as she did. Therefore, racial differences do not distract her from the commitment to teach "all" children or from fully enjoying teaching.

Black Teachers' Racial Identities and Pedagogical Practices

As indicated in the literature review teachers, regardless of race, were not encouraged to think through race. Among the Black teachers, it is clear that all three embody a distinct racial identity that influences their pedagogical and cultural styles. As indicated by Helms (1993) McIntyre (1997), West (1993) and Frankenberg (1993) racial identity is central to teachers' pedagogical and classroom practices. In addition among these three Black women their identity is also political and culturally disaffirmed in multi-institutional context they have to navigate as educators. The afore-mentioned narratives of Starr Bright, Gloria Scott, and Diane Wilder affirm Ladson-Billings' (1994) theoretical assertion that racial identity is more than just a personal identity and is in fact designated by others, in particularly in educational and familial environments. For these Black women, their racial identity was a marked cultural identifier along with gender that most directly impact their identity as a teacher.

The Black teacher participants make sense of their racial identity through the collective Black racial heritage in which they were socialized. Black teacher participants saw parents as important allies and the community as a potential resource to support

and affirm the children. Black teacher participants addressed the systematic advantages of skin color in education. Similar to Tatum's (1997) findings the Black teachers incorporated strategies in the classroom to address the system of institutionalized privilege experienced by White teachers. In addition, Black teachers in this study learned from childhood that they are growing up in a racialized society and that their racial identity mattered. Consequently, the intersection between their racial identity and teaching practices are linked to their life experiences as members of a group that is marginalized in a racialized society. The work done by hooks (1994), Foster, (1997), Ladson-Billings (1994), Delpit (1995) are all-illustrative of the framework that addressed the importance of racial identity that shapes and influences teaching practices.

Teacher Participants

White Teachers

Candy Swift

Candy, a kindergarten teacher in her early thirties was born in a suburban community south of Boston. She grew up in Boston and attended Boston Public Schools at the elementary and high school levels. She attended a Catholic middle school.

I attended a school that was very multicultural until I got into the fifth grade. Then it was less and less. The make-up of the class was multicultural but the curriculum really wasn't. But I had very good teachers for the most part. My second grade teacher was so caring and nurturing. As a child I always wanted to please the teachers. I would feel good about doing the right thing or doing well. Hard work seemed to pay off.

As a little girl she loved her teachers and was “*fascinated*” by them, so much so that she “*played school downstairs in the cellar*”. Playing teacher was fun, but Candy also felt that becoming a teacher would be rewarding. She shared her thoughts with her father, who conveyed his views on the financial rewards of teaching.

When I thought of becoming a teacher my father would say, ‘Well you’re not going to make a lot of money, but if it’s something you really want to do, do it’. I just felt like it was something that would be very rewarding, as I got older. I felt that I had the patience and desire.

Candy remembered the nurturing she received in second grade and thought that patience was a desired attribute of a kindergarten teacher.

I always thought kindergarten was a nurturing time. It’s a time where children are growing socially, emotionally, and academically. But it’s a fun time.

Candy has “*a very close family*”. Her parents were “*always very supportive and cared about what was happening in school*”. They taught her to believe that “*everyone was the same*”. So when she was asked about her first awareness of racial differences she immediately shut the tape recorder off for fifteen seconds to think about the question. Very slowly and thoughtfully she replied.

My parents never made, you know, made me to think there was a difference. I grew up believing everyone’s the same even though we are different.

Candy did notice that people were different because growing up she heard “*different people talk about, you know, Black people are moving in or busing kind of stuff.*”

And it wasn’t that I would hear a whole conversation either. I remember as a child trying to piece it together, ‘Well, what’s the matter? What do they mean by that?’ Because, I didn’t hear anyone saying, ‘Oh, I don’t want that Black person to move in’. I heard kind of like a buzz”.

Candy accepted what her parents taught her because *"they're not what I would call racial or racist by any means"*. Also, she accepted what she was hearing in her community because she heard no *"real negative connotations"* about Black and Hispanic people. So, Candy never learned that it was ok to question her parents or any one in the community about *"the buzz"* regarding Black and Hispanic people.

I don't think that I ever brought it up to my parents' attention or anything. It was one of those things that I had thought in my mind but, you know, never pursued. Never asked about it. Never!

Candy's parents and grandparents gave her a strong sense of self, but it did not include a racial identity. So, Candy had to think about how she racially identifies. She racially and ethnically identified as *"I would say Caucasian, Irish, Italian, and Scottish"*.

Although Candy had to think about her racial identity she says teachers' racial identities are important to their teaching practices because *"children need to identify"* with their teachers.

I think children of all races need teachers of all races to be represented at the school. Not per se that Black children need to have a Black teacher or White children need to have a White teacher. I think there definitely needs to be a mixture. It's important. It's promoting a racism, I feel, if there is not a multicultural mixture in the schools or in any job for that matter. I think it will be racist to not have a mixture because everyone's culture and identity need to be valued and represented.

It also took Candy some time to think about how her racial identity influenced her teaching practices.

I don't know. I try to incorporate like, self-esteem activities and a lot of positive reinforcements. Then I try to be very aware of how I word things and what I say to children. My parents and grandparents have always given me a strong sense of self. Not really a cultural identity. I can't say I really know a whole lot about Ireland or Italy. But I've been given that sense of pride and traditions. Birthdays we eat at the table together. We have Sunday dinner, just family. More family traditions than cultural. But

just a strong sense of identity. Just being yourself and working for what you want. Goals! To achieve goals and that kinds of stuff.

Candy carried that “sense of self” in her work at a day center “with children of kindergarten age and transitional first grade children”. It was located in an affluent suburban community and the “children came from all over with very different backgrounds”.

I started to see that even the children whose parents had a lot of money and prestigious jobs were just as needy, if not as more needy than other children. They didn't have the time with their parents and that was so important. There were other children who did not have other things. But they had the emotional support of their parents, if not the financial support. It was different to see how all children had different needs. So it was nice to learn from that.

Providing children with emotional support was important to Candy and it shaped her philosophy of education.

I think that all children can learn and it is the teacher's responsibility to start. First build the child emotional and socially. Let the child know that he or she can succeed and build upon the strengths; and not let anything else get in the way.

This philosophy also influenced her teaching practices.

Although I am working on this, I always tend to, especially with children who are having a real hard time or something is going on that makes it difficult, I tend to be a little less...How do I put it? Let certain things go. I know that's not right because it is not helping the child. I feel that children need and deserve an education. Safety, individuality, and self-esteem I think they are all very important.

Candy's six students, all boys receiving special education services, and all are on “individual educational plans with varied home lives.” It is a racially diverse classroom - “two White boys or Caucasian boys, three African-American or Black boys and one

Hispanic boy.” She describes them as “all very needy in different ways whether it is academically or socially.”

They are dealing with all kinds of problems at home prior to coming to school. They need to learn how to get along with others, accept positive interaction with one another, and accept positive praise and encouragement. It is just something that some of them are not used to. I do a lot of reading, language arts, interactive writing, and storytelling. Tapes. Books on tapes. We do a lot of that kind of stuff. I try to do a lot of the hands on type of learning. I could be more strict, and I should have been in the beginning.

In college, Candy “had all the ‘isms’ in weekend seminars” and attended “just a segment” addressing racial issues at the New England Kindergarten Conference only “four or five years ago”. She thought that the Boston Public Schools’ Center for Leadership Development offered courses “on stuff like that”.

I am sure in the curriculum and development book there are courses on stuff like that. I think there needs to be more of a focus in the school on, you know, character traits and getting along with other people. A lot of these children are very aggressive and they have to be taught these social skills. We’re focusing so much on the literacy program, which is very, very important but the behavior and the self-discipline and all that kind of stuff, need to come into play. I think that needs to be addressed.

Summary

Candy Swift believes that safety, individuality, and self-esteem are important to children’s learning. She tries to provide a safe environment for her students to develop self-esteem and a strong sense of themselves because that is what worked for her at home and in school. Her parents and grandparents were supportive and helped her develop a strong sense of who she was as an individual and not as part of a larger cultural group. Her teachers were nurturing and caring.

Although she had an awareness of racial differences, the actions and behaviors of her family sent the message that people were all the same. However, the conversations she heard in her community about Black and Hispanic people; raised her consciousness of racial differences. She had questions about what she heard but chose not to bring them to the attention of her parents nor to anyone else to seek out the answers. Candy believed that since her family never promoted racial differences they were not *“racist by any means.”* Also, since she attended school with and had friends of *“totally different races, color never really made a difference”* to her. Her color-blind belief was not challenged in her own schooling, her teacher education programs nor through professional development. Thus, her teaching practices were influenced by her beliefs about racial differences, that is, all children are the same.

Candy believed the school needed to focus more on character traits and getting along rather than the literacy program. Yet she does acknowledge that the literacy program is very, very important. Nevertheless, she thinks that without self-discipline and good behavior the children would not learn to read. After all she had learned to read by doing the right thing and hard work. Candy was modeling what she had learned from life experiences at home and in schools.

Dorothy Reed

Dorothy, who is fifty years old, “grew up in a very Jewish neighborhood” north of Boston. She racially identified as White.

I am also part Irish and German. Three forth Irish and one forth German. My grandfather was a Rabbi. I consider myself an American.

Dorothy does not consider a racial identity as important as being an *"American."* She believes that *"America is the greatest country in the world"* and does not *"look at race as being that important."* Dorothy *"values education, religion, family, and hard work."*

My parents worked hard to give us an excellent education. It was important to them that we all get an excellent education. My mother was always at home. We had to do our homework first. My mother wanted to be a writer. My father was a fireman.

Dorothy has two sisters; one is a teacher and the other a psychologist. She also has a brother who is a renowned medical doctor. After college Dorothy got married, *"stayed at home, did the mommy thing, and lots of volunteer work at the museum."* She decided to become a teacher at forty something because many of her family members were teachers.

I followed along with my family and got an excellent education. My older sister was a teacher. My education was excellent, and I learned a lot. I started teaching at forty-three as a district substitute teacher and came to Sony Middle School at forty-four. We talked a lot about teaching in my family, and now my daughter is a teacher.

Dorothy could not recall a story about the moment when she first became aware of racial differences. She *"was brought up in an all White area"* where she never had to acknowledge racial differences and experience racial conflicts. She admits she *"never knew a Black person until"* she became a substitute teacher at the age of forty-three. She told a story her husband told her of his trip to the South and not being served because he was on the *"Colored Only"* side of the counter. Shaking her head and smiling she said, *"I never had any experiences like that which is good because I have never seen it."* The *"it"* Dorothy refers to is *"racial conflict."* Dorothy's statement

demonstrates what Peggy McIntosh (1990) means when she wrote “whiteness protected her from the hostility, distress, and violence which I was being subtly trained to visit, upon people of color”(p.35).

I see differences. It's conflict. I don't see racial conflict among the kids. When you keep talking about race relations, I think of people getting along. I've got to tell you honestly and I swear on my father's soul. I see kids; I don't even think of color.

Dorothy had taken a color-blind approach to teaching and learning. Her preparation to teach did not help her to see how the racial identity of children affected teachers' expectations of them and their educational experiences. She had “no courses” on racial issues when she got her undergraduate degree in 1970. In 1994 when she got her Master's degree, she learned that “diversity” was about addressing the cultural needs of children.

Diversity! I have taken courses in college on that. It's more about how to meet everyone needs. I have a Masters in Special Education. So, it's how to meet the kid's needs on more an academic level, not does Johnny and Suzy get along together. Never on that. It's more how to bring all their cultures in and address all their cultures. I see things like that.

What Dorothy “see[s]” as being important in understanding cultural differences in an academic context is what appeared as “a great MCAS question.” She believes that “kids from other cultures don't know what is a Lazy Suzy or the steamships from the 1800's sailing down the Mississippi.” Dorothy believes that cultural difference is “not a race thing”.

It's about getting the kids out in the world and matriculating and you know, being a good citizen. Live and let live.

Dorothy does not indicate there was anything in her teacher education program that challenged her to think about her students as unique individuals in a racialized society.

Whoever I get, I get. They're all the same to me. Wherever they came from, wherever they are, they are all kids. Seriously!

Since Dorothy did not see her racial identity as an influence in her teaching practices she believes that her students are also color-blind.

It is never brought up. It never comes up. I live in Albright, and it is not an issue. The kids don't see it as a problem. When a kid said to me that I didn't like him because he is Black, the other kids told him not to go there because that is not what I am about. I just don't get into that with them. They are more likely to talk about the boy/girl things.

Dorothy is not totally color-blind because she noticed, *"the school is like ninety-eight percent minority and all my classes with the exception for one is one hundred percent minority."* She has *"never taken"* any professional development programs that addresses racial issues and teaching and *"is not aware"* of any district policies that affects the school's racial climate. Above all she does not feel she needs to attend any professional development programs that address racial issues in teaching and learning.

I have only taught in Boston and I never seen racial conflict. I don't feel I need any. I don't. Any problems I may have had would have been years ago. That would be students being mainstream that could not speak the language. That's the only thing. Maybe I'm just oblivious. I might have my head in a cloud. I don't know.

The hesitation in Dorothy's voice as she talked about being oblivious suggests she was giving more thought to what she was saying. There was no hesitation in her voice as she provided a description of her classroom and teaching practices that reflect her *"everyday life"* values and beliefs.

I have a multicultural classroom. Mostly minority children. My teaching is connected to everyday life. I bring my family members to talk to the children. I teach with a holistic approach. (Pointing to the walls and doors) I have the kids work on display because they are learning some interesting things. They have hands on projects. I keep a portfolio. (She takes it out of the desk draw. It included her acceptance letters, letters of recommendations and accomplishments, and photos of her students' working in labs and at exhibits.) I try to be funny and joke with them. I do yell sometimes. I try to keep a positive attitude because that's what good teaching and learning is all about. An attitude.

Dorothy admits she yells and screams at her students. I arrived early for the observation and noticed she talked loudly when interacting with students. The students' works were on display on the walls inside and outside the classroom. There were drawings of environmental issues and responses to key questions. There were also photos of children with completed projects. The attitude she refers to in teaching and learning is about how to control the students and getting them to "conform and be good."

I do the program at the medical school. I now have my kids going with me. You know Joyce is Hispanic I guess. Two are African-Americans. Ahh, they are the sweetest things in the whole wide world. Of course, I'm going to pick good kids. I'm not crazy. I'm not going to bring kids that are not going to conform and be good. But you know they are all kids.

Dorothy's attitude and beliefs about conformity connect her philosophy of education to her sense of obedience and patriotism. Unlike Gloria Scott she followed the school policies and wrote key questions on the board. She took attendance while the children wrote the questions and their vocabulary words in their notebooks. Gloria believes:

Given the right environment teaching is fun. You have to teach with your heart. You have to teach children to learn to be good citizens.

Summary

Dorothy Reed identifies as an American, and she grew up on lessons of God, country, and family in a mostly Jewish neighborhood. Her family worked hard for their “*excellent*” education and she listed their professional careers as proof. She talked about her knowledge in the subject areas she teaches and uses her teaching skills efficiently to teach children how to conform to school rules, to speak English, and be good citizens. A teaching strategy connected “*with everyday life*” allows Dorothy to bring her family into the classroom to share their professional knowledge with “*mostly Minority children*”. This strategy signifies that Dorothy believes her life is “morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal” (McIntosh, 1990) for the children to model in order to achieve an excellent education.

Dorothy started teaching full-time at forty-four years of age in an urban school that “*is like ninety-eight percent minority*” students. Dorothy “*never knew a Black person*” until she was a substitute teacher the year before she started teaching full-time. When she started teaching full-time she admitted she saw differences but not racial differences. For her, racial differences mean racial conflicts.

Dorothy did not see racial differences as being that important and nothing in her “*excellent*” education had challenged her to think differently about racial issues in teaching. In fact, her teacher’s education preparation reinforced her learning the rules, customs, and principals of American patriotism. She learned how to teach and to meet the needs of everyone who could “*conform to be good.*” She believes her teaching practices meet the needs of all her students and racial differences in her school is not a

problem because she *“never sees it and never heard any racial name calling in the school”*.

Dorothy's teaching practices are influenced by what she learned about racial matters in the United States from her family, her schooling, and her life experiences. Her community has also validated these lessons. The fact that she does not see racial conflict or racial issues as being that important extends beyond being color blind because she has made the choice to be in the company of people of her own race most of the time (McIntosh, 1990). In her role as teacher she feels she must teach children to fit into the mainstream of the United States' society (Sleeter & Grant, 1999) and be good citizens. Dorothy's assimilation and indoctrination approach to teaching and learning embraces color-blindness in the classroom.

Rebecca Century

Rebecca, a first grade teacher in her early thirties was born in Eastern Europe, about 30-35 years ago and *“sort of grew up in an urban area in Connecticut.”* She racially identified as *“a mixture.”*

I am Irish. Kind of an Irish, Canadian, French, Dutch, and English. I always call myself a mutt. I don't have a big identity to what I am.

While extrapolating her racial identity, Rebecca notes that during her teacher preparation classes,

We read a lot of books on rich, especially African-American culture and traditions. I'm like, we don't have any big tradition. I don't have any cool things. I feel like I am this generic person. Oh, my God. My family, when we celebrate Christmas, it really isn't as big. Pretty much growing up it was presents and you did nice things for people. It was about giving. It was a great holiday. But I thought, 'Oh, everybody just celebrates

Christmas". Then you realize that not everyone does, but they have a different tradition. I wish I felt like I had a big, perhaps more of a cultural identity, but I don't.

Rebecca did not grow up thinking about teaching as a career goal.

I was out of college. I was a real estate paralegal and really frustrated with my job. I had been there for a year and just felt like I wasn't doing anything productive. I had been volunteering for the AIDS Action Committee working with a little girl. I really enjoyed it. I was like a big sister and just thought that teaching would be something that I would enjoy, could help people and make a difference in somebody's life.

Rebecca entered a teacher education program that offered "sort of a certification program" in urban education.

It was a terrific experience, especially their urban teaching program because, I guess, it was the most diverse group of people I've ever worked with. Ah, they really sort of hand picked people to make it as diverse as possible. People with diverse ideas and diverse backgrounds and cultures. So that helped prepare me, especially since I wanted to teach in an urban setting.

Rebecca wanted to teach in an urban area because she "sort of grew up in an urban area" and it was "just the kind of setting" in which she "was comfortable".

I know that it is tough and more of a challenge, but I thought my personality and the type of person that I am, that I would be good at it. I just felt it was important for someone to teach in an urban setting to be understanding of other cultural backgrounds, family values, and beliefs.

Rebecca did not describe what kind of personality she had or the type of person she was that led her to believe she would be an effective teacher. She believed that she would be "comfortable in" urban schools because she grew up watching her parents "treat everybody the same."

My parents never discussed like big racial issues and were never protesters or outraged like, "Can you believe this?" I don't remember having conversations like this at home, "Can you believe the inequality or whatever?" But just watching how they treated everyone the same, with

respect. Whatever race someone was it didn't matter. I guess it was funny. I knew people were different colors and had different beliefs, but we were all the same and got along. I guess, everybody I associated with all had the same ideals and beliefs.

Rebecca had “a great childhood with the people” she associated with in her family, schools, and community. She was aware that some of the people she knew in college and thought were “opened minded” would make some discriminatory comments. She dated a White guy in college whose father’s beliefs about racial difference made it “really hard” for her to remain oblivious to the fact that not all people are treated the same.

I dated a guy in college, and his dad was a cop. I didn't realize it until we'd been dating for a couple of weeks that they were very prejudice. I walked into their kitchen. This is awful. They had a picture with a Black face with a red circle and a slash through it. I like couldn't...That was it. I couldn't...It was over. That was so hard. I could not even believe I would see something like that. Especially from someone who is a police officer and is supposed to uphold the law. I did not say anything when I saw it. I just said, “Ok, this is not a family I want to be associated with”. I felt bad for the guy I was dating. He didn't agree with his father, but he wouldn't go against his father. He had friends who were of other races. But he'd never tell his father or bring them home. I can imagine how hard that was for him, but there was no way I was going to pursue a relationship where that was going to be the case. Because my kids were going to get along with everyone. That's it!

Rebecca said she felt she was being “naive” to believe that everyone was going to get along. But that belief was the core of her childhood experience as well as her teaching practices. She wanted everyone to get along so as to avoid conflict. When the children’s behavior toward each other created conflict in her classroom she tried to find ways to talk about “getting along” rather than dealing with potential racial issues that she was not prepared to confront.

Most of my children are Black. I have two Hispanic children. I thought things were great until I had an incident in my classroom. Five kids accused one Hispanic boy of saying "I kill Blacks". He said it was "I kill clothes." The parents are backing him up.

Rebecca did not see the parents or the children as allies or potential resources to help her understand and confront cultural and racial differences in her classroom and teaching practices. When she made the choice to not confront the parents and the little boy a little girl in the classroom demonstrated her awareness of the racial and cultural differences.

Later in the day, one of the Black girls in the class got mad at him because he was teasing her. So, she said, "I kill Hispanic". I had two children to come up to tell me she said it. She admitted she said that. So that helped. So, I could talk about it. Where he is not admitting it, I can't really bring this whole thing in front of the class because they will say, "We heard you say it" and he'll say he didn't. Since she admitted it I could open the door to having a conversation about 'we are all the same and we need to treat each other the same', you know!

Rebecca wanted more professional development programs and workshops that addressed racial issues to help her teach children how to get along.

You know something that I would love. Just someone to say, "Here is the curriculum on teaching kids to get along." I know that there is not one set way, but it would be nice to have one. Right now I am going on how I was brought up which is different from these kids. But I am just trying to instill "it is great how we are different. And we all have things that are special about us. You are so lucky. You have nice dark skin. I was in Jamaica two weeks ago trying to get that dark". I want them to know I value them and to make them feel valued. I value me for my reasons.

Although Rebecca valued who she is, she "struggled" with her racial identity.

She thinks that the teacher's racial identity is important to her teaching practices.

I think it is even though I struggle with my own. I think it's important to try and be aware as much as you can of different racial identities. I don't want to make judgments based on my beliefs or values that I have grown up with. I try to keep to the school rules and what the system has set up. These are the things we do in school. But I try to be conscious. It doesn't

always happen. We're human and I find myself saying a lot of things that I heard my mother say as a kid. Then I realize that doesn't work all the time. It is important to be aware of yourself and what your cultural beliefs are. I try to not to infringe on other kids. I try to do my best. I try and be neutral.

Rebecca learned from her mother that all people were the same, yet she believed her students were *"lucky...to have nice dark skin"*. Although she did not want to make racial judgments based on her beliefs and values, she did because neither her parents nor her urban teacher education program adequately prepared her to deal with racial issues in a racialized society.

Summary

Rebecca Century identifies as *"this generic person - a mutt, a mixture of Irish, Canadian, French, Dutch and English"* but still does not feel she has an identity with a big tradition and culture. Growing up, she learned from watching her parents treating everyone the same to believe that everybody was the same. She was aware of racial differences and people having different beliefs in spite of her parents' silence about racial issues and their treating all people with respect. Rebecca learned to believe *"it didn't matter"* what someone's racial identity was until she was in college where she was exposed to flagrant racial hatred in the home of a White police officer. Nothing in Rebecca's life up to that point had prepared her to be *"outraged"* enough to discuss the situation with her date, the son of the police officer. She knew enough about racial issues to know that she would not be able to get along with the police officer if she continued to date his son. It was this attitude of getting along to avoid conflict and to remain neutral that Rebecca took with her into her teaching practices.

Rebecca chose an urban teacher education program because she believed she had the personality and was the type of person that could understand others' cultural backgrounds, their family values and beliefs. She learned teaching skills to teach diverse learners. However, she felt she needed additional skills to teach children how to get along. Her teacher education preparation did not help change that belief or provide her with a broader understanding of the role race plays in education.

White Teachers Racial Identities and Pedagogical Practices

All three White teachers, Candy Swift, Dorothy Reed, and Rebecca Century, illustrate how being White allows these women to remain embedded in privileges that are distinctly based on race. As illustrated by Peggy McIntosh (1990) it is not very difficult as a White person to remain oblivious to race. As McIntosh (1990) mentions, "Whites are carefully taught not to recognize White privilege" since it was "something which put others at a disadvantage." As indicated in their narratives, these teachers did not believe they were supporting a system of racial superiority in their daily practices and in fact, downplayed their Whiteness as a racial identity. This strategy is not unique to these White women teachers and has been addressed in the scholarly work of Janet Helm (1992), Delpit (1995), Neito (1996), and Tatum (1997). In fact, discussions around individualism in the narrative illustrate the cultural context of not having to address their whiteness as a racialized identity. In addition, references to being color-blind in teaching practices is illustrative of the invisibility of marginalized or privileged skin color. Vivian Paley (1979) in her powerful illustration of the inadequacy of the color-blind approach

addresses her complicity as she is pressured by other White teachers to maintain the color-blind approach despite her dissatisfactions.

The White teacher participants, given the racial profile of the students in the schools, did not see or believe there were racial issues or racial problems in their buildings. Again, when examining the power differential and inequalities among racial groups, most teachers are not taught to engage in a structural analysis of race in education as it connects to their own racial identity. West (1993), Frankenberg (1993), and Browsers & Hunt (1996) illustrate the importance of addressing the social construction of racial identity. Thus, we need to address the construction of whiteness in order to get beyond discussions that simply focus on racial issues as “a Black problem.” In fact, the importance of the multi-dimensional construct of race must embody the dynamic of White culture as the dominant norm and other racialized identities as marginalized.

The narratives also illustrate how White identity is constructed through intra and interpersonal interactions from infancy on through to adulthood. The White teachers' narratives illustrate how they constructed their conceptualization of race based on socialization practices in the families and communities they grew up in and the White neighborhood schools they attended which reaffirmed the dominant cultural values of White privilege. These White teachers focused on their personal identities and did not emphasize or acknowledge their racial identity. As Gary Howard (1999) mentions, race is a learned category and influences teaching practices. These teachers often interacted with other White teachers and the racialized interactions occurred in student/teacher relations more frequently than among their own peers. Evidently this dynamic allows for

the de-racialization of their racial identity. White teachers expressed a desire for more professional development programs to address discipline issues as a means of controlling students' behavior. White teachers did not reach out to parents or the students' communities as a potential resource for support of children's emotional, social, and intellectual development. The White teacher participants appeared to neither view parents as important allies nor the community as a potential resource. Yet, these teachers simultaneously expressed a belief in the sameness of all students.

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (1990) argues that Black students' academic issues are relegated to deviant, deficit based student behavior stemming from outside educational parameters. Hence, these White teachers do not perceive their racial identity as having anything to do with their positionality in the classroom. It appears that these White teachers accept the constructs of race that position them in a superior role to students of color and their families without questioning the structural imbalances. As illustrated in McIntosh's (1990) seminal article on White privilege, these teachers also do not view their beliefs and actions as racist and firmly believe in a system of meritocracy. It is understandable that these White teachers downplay their Whiteness as a racial identity. They demonstrate their awareness of white normative by not having to consider their own social construction of race as teachers. It appears that these white teachers do not view race as a political construct or as a social responsibility that operates systematically across institutions. Unlike Thigpen's (1997) decision to focus on urban Black students to illustrate how race granted systematic advantages in both economic and educational spheres; these White teachers have to unlearn the color-blind

approach taught to them at home and at school and later on in their teacher education programs.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Findings

This chapter synthesizes the major findings and implications of this research and recommends further actions for teacher educators preparing prospective teachers to teach all children. The primary research questions guiding this study asked: How do teachers connect their racial identity and their teaching practice? What experiences if anything, from their teachers' preparation programs, raised their awareness of racial issues in education?

Whether they declared a racial identity or not, there is a connection between the teacher participants' racial identities and their teaching practices. The study focuses on racial identity to make the point that no matter how the teachers perceive themselves, they are all racially classified based on how others have been taught to see them, as well as how others react to them. In the United States, all people are racially classified whether they want to be or not because of legislative, social, scientific, and media practices. The problem for most of the teachers was not the racial classification of "black" and "white". The problem for them is the racial policies and practices that lead people to believe that Black people are inferior and White people are superior and acting as if it is real. The connection between teachers' racial identities and their teaching lies in the attitudes and actions of their families and their reactions to dominant/oppressive beliefs that became part of their everyday lived experiences. These lived experiences made these teachers classify and internalize these beliefs as truths or as myths. Their teacher education programs provided no teaching strategies and racial content to bridge the connection between their experiential and analytical

ways of knowing about their racial identity and their teaching practices. Therefore, when the teacher participants were faced with racial issues in their classrooms, they made the choice to confront or deny them based on their level of awareness and comfort in dealing with race matters learned at home. Each teacher recalled significant racial incidents in their lived experience and offered a rationale for the decisions they made at that moment in time. Importantly, they had not learned in their teacher education programs how to communicate across racial lines in ways that reduced the fear, anxiety, and insensitivity when talking about racial matters in teaching and learning. I hope the concluding words of the teacher participants, recommendations, and suggestions for future research reduce the fear of communicating across racial lines as all teacher educators and prospective teachers begin to critically question how they can develop strategies to live and teach in a racialized society.

Teacher Participants and Life Choices

Each teacher participant in this study held a belief about life that framed her thinking about teaching and racial issues. This belief is called a persona. The persona is derived from a phrase or words that characterize the choices she makes in her teaching practices. Carl Jung, a psychoanalyst, maintains the persona is a complex way of behaving that comes into existence for reasons of adaptation or personal convenience (CW vol.6 p465 para 801). The phrases describe the teacher participants' lessons learned from their parents about how to live in the world. The fact that they all live in a racially classified world, the persona, emphasizes how they learn to live in a racialized world and how their racialized life experiences influence their teaching

practices. I will briefly summarize each teacher's lived experiences within a racial context. In particular, attention is given to how these teachers experience racial issues within their families, communities, and the schools where they teach. In addition racial beliefs about self and others surface as these women address the challenges in connecting their racial identity and their teaching practices as a means of raising awareness of racial issues in education. Following these brief summaries, I will identify major themes of these teachers' pedagogical practices, their philosophy of education, and their normative assumptions about racial identities depending on whether they are Black or White. It is important to understand critical incidents that shape teachers' understanding of racial issues and how in fact, that understanding is critical in the teaching practices utilized in the classroom.

Black Teachers

Starr Bright: ***"Know what you need to do. Do it."*** Starr's family were community activists who gave her the skills and confidence, so she could do what she needed to do when she found herself in difficult situations. They taught her how to take a stand against injustices by modeling the behavior they expected from her. Starr learned to ask questions to help her understand what incidents counted as racial issues and what issues were not. She wanted to be a teacher and knew what she had to do to become an effective teacher for all children. She did it. Starr knew she needed to acquire the teaching experience so she took teaching positions in suburban, rural, and urban schools because she could get along with all people. She reached out to other

educators to strengthen her teaching strategies in those areas where she felt her teacher's education program missed.

Starr understood the social issues in the community (i.e., housing and community violence) that impacted her students' every day lives and learning. For example, the Big Dig, a construction project in Boston in which buildings and expressways are torn down to build a new tunnel, had created a serious rat problem in the community where a lot of her students lived. The relocation of families during extermination of the rodents created an attendance problem. Starr used this information to keep the lines of communications open with parents while she sought alternative ways of educating her students.

Starr had a matter of fact way of talking about teaching and racial issues because she lived with the knowledge that racial policies and practices were designed to limit her place in the world. Her parents' actions and words insisted that there were no limits if she knew what she needed to do and did it. Starr's teaching style mirrors the lessons learned at home.

Gloria Scott: *"Stand up for what you believe. Just do it! Just do it."* Gloria uses her life experiences as the model for teaching her students to overcome limits imposed on them by racial policies and practices in schools. Her classroom is filled with artifacts from places that she traveled to learn more about other peoples' way of being. Her students' witness how she subverts some school's policies to provide them a good education and to demonstrate how she stands up for what she believes. For example, Gloria told her students she was supposed to put key questions on the board every day for them to answer. She explained to the students that she was not going to do it

because she felt it is was not the best way to teach students. She told her students that she wanted them to come up with their own key questions. However, she pointed out to them that she would put the key questions on the board when she knew she was going to be observed by the school leaders. In these exchanges, Gloria teaches her students how to strategically survive in an environment that does not value them and their knowledge.

Gloria's life experiences included how her parents advocated for her while teaching her to be an advocate for herself. They taught her to stand up and fight in the name of righteousness. Gloria used those lessons learned at home to teach her students how not to fall into racial traps by getting caught up in labels. To reinforce her teaching to stand up and fight for what they believe she spent class time teaching content and skills, and how to ask questions. She strived to give her students what her parents had given her a "good education." Gloria's teacher education program strengthened her teaching skills but her parents prepared her to stand and deliver.

Diane Wilder: *"Be comfortable with yourself, and you will be comfortable with your environments."* Diane grew up in an all Black community that provided her security, protection, and a good education. She knew there were other people in the world who had a problem with her racial classification, but she did not take it on as her problem. Diane knew what it would take to get her students excited about learning and she knew what it would take for her students to get along with other people. The personal contacts she developed with her teachers and her ability to reach out to other educators with whom she felt comfortable, helped her to create secure environments for her student to be independent learners.

Diane believed that going to an all Black school nurtured and challenged her socially and academically, so she saw nothing wrong with an all Black school for children in Boston. She knew that children learned best in a safe and comfortable environment as long as they were given a quality education that made them independent learners. It is what her parents provided for her, and she was compelled to provide the same to her students.

In summary, the Black teachers wanted the children to learn skills and content to improve their chances for academic success. They wanted to help the children become active participants in the social, economic, and political development of their communities. They saw education as a means of improving one's self-worth.

White Teachers

Candy Swift: *"I always want to please and do the right things."* Candy's beliefs about pleasing others and doing the right thing inform her teaching practices. She had pleased her teachers as a child by doing what she was told, and the teachers in turn nurtured and supported her. This allowed her to avoid conflict in school. Candy also knows that when she pleases her students she avoids conflicts. Candy used the words "racism" and "racist" because she apparently had no other language for talking about racial issues. It is interesting that she used those words because they tend to create the kind of racial conflict she seeks to avoid.

Candy could not draw any wisdom from her life experience to share with her students when they encountered problems in their daily lives that affected their learning.

Instead, she talked about her students having emotional problems and coming from dysfunctional homes. When Candy tried to draw on her past work experiences with other children who she believed had emotional problems, she linked race and class issues. She states that the children who came from financially affluent families had less emotional support than the “other” children with less wealth that had more emotional support.

Candy had really learned that racial classification was assigned to Black people. Her parents were supportive in every aspect of her life, but they provided nothing to help her work through the differences that skin color made in the lives of people who did not look like her. She accepted what was taught through silence and learned not to question what she saw if it did not please people and cause conflict.

Dorothy Reed: “Live and Let Live.” Dorothy grew up believing in God, family, and country. Her family taught her to value family, religion, and education. She believes commitment to family and God and an “excellent” education make you a good citizen. She reinforces this message, and brings family members into the classroom to help her do so.

She considers herself to be an American. She believes that Americans are color-blind and she denies the presence of racial issues in her school, which she reports is ninety-eight percent “minority” population. Even when her students acknowledge racial problems she attempts to convince them that she is not a race conscious person because the race of a person does not matter. If they live and let live they can all get along.

Dorothy's teacher education program helped her to hold on to her color-blind beliefs as well as reinforce her cultural stereotypical beliefs such as *"what people need to eat coming from other cultures."* She reported she was taught about the cultural differences of immigrant students and how to use that information as "building blocks" to meet their needs. Dorothy attempts to employ the same teaching strategies with everyone by strictly following the school district's guidelines and policies. However, she offered more learning opportunities to those students who conformed to her standards of citizenship. On Dorothy's classroom wall was a poster of a little White boy saluting the flag saying "God Bless America." This poster speaks loudly of Dorothy's patriotism and her construct of whiteness as the norm.

Rebecca Century: "Getting along." Rebecca's family taught her that race did not matter because everyone was the same, and it was more important to get along with everyone. She wanted to help people, and decided to work in an urban school so she could help children get along. Rebecca also believed that it was important for teachers to be aware of their cultural beliefs, but she thought it was a better idea to try to be neutral when cultural conflict occurs. These beliefs informed her teaching practices.

Rebecca graduated from a teacher education program that she believes prepared her to teach in an urban school. Since Rebecca had spent time watching her mother, a para-professional, work with children, she felt she had some teaching strategies upon which to build. She also relied on her parents' child-rearing practices to help her handle discipline issues. However, the thing Rebecca remembers learning in

her urban teaching program that was not consistent with what she had learned at home was not to demand Black children look at her in the eyes when talking to her. Rebecca could not provide a rationale for this, other than they were taught at home that their eyes are supposed to be down. She had no way of knowing where this stereotypical thinking came from and could think of no way to check for accuracy among her friends. All Rebecca wants from professional development opportunities are strategies for teaching children how to get along. Her social construct of race remains unchallenged.

Implications

The way the six teachers in this study talked about racial identity and teaching practices suggest they all had little to no experience during their teacher preparation and professional development of analyzing a racialized system of schooling that systematically reinforced injustice for some while simultaneously offering opportunities of advancement to others. The impact of racial policies and practices are deeply rooted in the minds of all the teachers. Racial educational policies and practices become manifest in urban schools in the distribution of who receives special education for academic services or social services, the racial makeup of students placed in advanced placement classes and remedial classes, and the number of Black teachers who teach special education classes versus the number who teach advanced classes. Though all the teachers see this, their life experiences dictate ways to process and think about what they see in ways that cause them to accept these occurrences as the norm and not to question these situations.

Neither the Black nor the White teachers had access to cross-cultural language to talk about teaching and racial identity. For example, all the Black teachers and all the White teachers talked about the children's need to learn to listen. The Black teachers gave examples of the children's need to practice good listening skills in order to hear instruction to complete assignments. For them the emphasis lay on learning. The White teachers also focus on the children's poor listening skills but interpreted them as discipline problems. To them, listening was key to getting along. The White teachers wanted the children to learn social skills to conform to the expectations of schooling. All the teachers demonstrated different levels of awareness and understanding about how racial practices and policies impact their daily lives. One Black teacher talked very passionately about how she experiences racial injustice in the schools that operated like "slave plantations" and she considered the teachers and staff to be vicious, mean-spirited, and morally corrupt in the way they treated Black and Latino children. Yet, she continues to open her mind and heart to experience other people's ways of living. One of the White teachers was at the very far end of this kind of thinking: She felt she had no need for learning about other people's way of experiencing the world because there was only one way to experience it: that's the American way. The point here is that these two teachers require different points of departure to allow them to meaningfully engage in critical dialogue about race and teaching.

Summary: Commonalities and Differences

The Black and White teachers shared some commonalities and differences in their life experiences and teaching practices that provide insight into how racial classification shapes self-perceptions as well as their perceptions of others. All teacher participants, regardless of race, received positive support and encouragement from their families, significant others, and their community. All of the teacher participants were also influenced strongly by at least one positive experience with a teacher. The six teacher participants grew up and were socialized in segregated and separated communities in the North and South. All teacher participants believed that any child could learn. However, the essence of what that means differs between the Black and White teachers, and this disparity will be discussed in the following section. Finally, all teacher participants believed their teacher education programs had provided them with the theories and techniques of teaching, but they were neither well prepared for the diversity of students in their classrooms nor for the racialized environments in educational settings.

The disparate life experiences of Black and White Teacher participants with regards to their life experiences and teaching practices provide many insights into how racial classification shaped their self-perceptions as well as their perceptions of others. Black teacher participants appeared to see parents as important allies and the communities of which they were members as potential resources for support and affirmation of the goals they set in their classrooms. The White teacher participants did not focus on the importance of creating links with parents or to the communities in which the children in the classroom belonged. The White teacher participants also mentioned

that they did not see or believe there were racial issues or racial problems in their classrooms and even within the schools. In contra-distinction the Black teacher participants clearly addressed racial dynamics in their classrooms and in the schools. They often stressed the racial profiles of the students, teachers, administrators, and of the staff in the schools. White teachers addressed the need for more professional development programs and workshops in order to enhance discipline and control students' disruptive behavior in the classrooms. Black teachers on the other hand addressed the need for more professional development programs related to teaching strategies and recent pedagogical tools that could enhance students' learning such as using both left and right hemisphere in assignments and delivery of instruction.

Finally, in a racial context, the Black teacher participants believed in the uniqueness of all students, and this worldview allowed them a fluid understanding of the intersection of race and teaching as political constructs. In contrast, the White teacher participants believed in the sameness of all students and in the importance of the meritocratic opportunity structure provided in public education. The White teacher participants discussed the importance of "the color-blind" approach in educational practices. Some of the practices mentioned by these teacher were: maintaining the same level of expectations for all students regardless of race; believing in fairness and objective assessment of students regardless of race; believing that all children are treated equally in the classroom and that social identity is not primarily marked by racial identity.

The Black teacher participants on the other hand consistently addressed the powerful, personal, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and educational construct of their racial identity. For them, racialized and gendered identity shaped their interactions and reactions to daily encounters across institutional contexts. They discussed long-standing inequalities and cultural stereotypes that rendered any discussion of a “color-blind” society inefficient and contributing to increasing hostility and misunderstanding between teachers and students. The Black teachers’ expressions of their racial identities are evident in their beliefs regarding teaching practices, such as: where they choose to teach and the expectations they hold for the students they teach. In fact, the preceding chapter clearly illustrates how effective teaching practices for these Black teacher participants are directly linked to using the non-color-blind approach in educational practices. Thus, this study affirms the importance of further research on teachers’ lived experiences in a racial context allowing for a better understanding of racial issues within their families, communities, and the schools in which they will teach. The only way teachers can be better prepared to teach in a racialized society is for all individuals, especially White professionals, to engage in discussions regarding the social and political construction of whiteness and issues regarding privileges and opportunities based on racialized social identity. Teaching practices are based on teachers’ understanding of broader ideological frameworks regarding racial identity. I have demonstrated how Black and White teachers define their own racial identities and how their racial identities affect the way they teach and interact with all students in their classroom and illustrate the importance of such theorizing.

In summary, the essence of living in a racially classified society is deeply rooted in the lives of all these teachers. The Black teachers were taught to acknowledge race as a political reality and treat it as such by not allowing it to become their problem. They recognized the presence of racial policies and practices in their every day lives but found ways to not let it limit what they needed to do. They shared that knowledge with their students through their teaching practices. They ventured outside their families, communities, and schools to seek more knowledge and understanding about teaching and learning to help them become better teachers of content and skills for all their students. They linked that knowledge with their racial ways of being in a racialized world, thereby connecting their racial identity to their teaching practices.

The White teachers were taught to deny the existence of racial classification in any form because it had no effect in their daily lives. However, two of the White teachers did acknowledge, that as children, they had some questions or doubts about what they saw and heard about racial differences but knew enough from the behavior of their parents not to ask questions. Since their K-12 education did not address racial issues in the curriculum they bought the myth that "Race was about Black people. Black people cannot get along with other people without creating conflict." So they came to believe that any conversations about race would lead to conflict. All of them developed strategies for denying racial policies and practices that privileged them and implemented those strategies in their teaching practices. None of the White teachers shared a story of taking a risk to confront any potential racial situation that challenged lessons learned at home and in schools, thus linking teaching and their racial identities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ways in which the Black and White teacher participants conceptualize their racial identities are demonstrated through the ways in which they describe their racialized personal experiences, teacher education preparation, and teaching practices. Interviews with teacher participants indicate that interactions with their students were racially contextualized in spite of what they believed about their racial identity and their teaching practices. These participating teachers brought their racial ways of knowing about other people into their teaching practices and were taught in their teacher education programs to maintain the status quo. The status quo values conformity, assimilation, patriotism, meritocracy, and the mystification of race.

Schools are systematically “tied into painful knots by virtue of legislative, social, scientific, and media practices of” racially classifying people (Webster, 1992, p.3). Therefore, one course or a year-long program that focuses on the problems of urban schools will not challenge centuries of beliefs about race being Black people's problem. A critical question is how do you get teachers to analytically and experientially talk about racial issues without the painful knots of fear?

It is necessary for teacher educators to prepare prospective teachers to be thinkers as well as doers since they are called on more and more to be advocates for social change as well as collaborators and mediators. It is also necessary to demystify racial classification in schools by acknowledging the functional complex of conflicting values and beliefs in a country that has always been multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-linguist, and multi-spiritual. Teachers most often avoid racial dialogues because they

fear conflict and anger, but they are not always able to see the value in it: Not all conflict leads to violence, and within conflict changes can occur.

In conclusion, this dissertation has answered the research questions I originally posed and has resulted in a series of new questions that merits serious scholarly attention. I believe it is necessary for teacher educators and prospective teachers to begin a critical dialogue that connects their teaching and racial identity by asking these critical questions:

- 1 What is the purpose of education in the 21st century?**
- 2 What are my beliefs about education?**
- 3 How is the purpose of education manifested in my beliefs about education?**
- 4 What do I know about racialization in the United States?**
- 5 How have I experienced racial classification within my family, community, and school?**

My own experiences in a doctoral writing group and philosophical ways of knowing about teaching and racial identity have lead to new ways of thinking about teachers' racial identity development and their teaching practices that the aforementioned questions raise. My phenomenological investigation clearly addresses the importance of racial identity as a social and political construct when addressing educational practices and pedagogy.

My Analytical Ways of Knowing

When I started writing this dissertation, I joined a writing group that consisted of five White women. I had some trepidation because I felt my research topic would cause conflict and the “culture of niceness” (McIntyre, 1997) would prevail and I would not get honest feedback. There were times in which that did happen. I stayed in the group because I wanted to know at what point, if ever, we would be able to have an insightful dialogue about racial identity and teaching. I noticed that the more writings I submitted the more I started to receive intense and passionate feedback. Above all, more personal stories about racial awareness learned at home and in schools were shared by all. I was beginning to gain a deeper understanding of how learned racial behavior remains a part of school cultures when what we know about each other remains part of a silent dialogue. No, we had not all transcended racial boundaries, but we had overcome the fear that separated us and kept us from asking the hard and difficult questions of each other.

In fact, this writing group allowed for my assessment of both my personal and professional lived experiences. I was not prepared in my student teaching to critically examine race as part of my lived experience and thus was unable until now to utilize that information as a source of knowledge. The writing group, the qualitative study I have engaged in, as well as my professional experiences have laid the groundwork for analyzing connections between racial identities and teaching practices. The writing group illustrated once again the powerful and emotive context surrounding any discussion of racial identity. In fact long standing cultural stereotypes emerged within the group itself. The most obvious was the racial imbalance of five white female

professionals and I, the “representative Black voice” in the group. We were challenged to think through patterns of communication, how to make decisions and how to offer criticism that would be heard and acted upon. I believe that my presence in this writing group allowed us to move beyond feelings of discomfort, guilt, disempowerment, and fear to a place of dialogue and camaraderie. I will provide one example of a recent encounter to illustrate the importance of multiple voices in assessing pedagogical practices. The five White members have been together for more than three years, and I have been with the writing group for two years. Recently, a member of the group was telling a story and mentioned a White teacher describing, in an off-handed manner, a Black student as lazy. I responded to her comment about the teacher because of something that I had recently read in Patrick Finn (1999) Literacy with an Attitude. The woman speaking asked me not to be hasty in my judgment of the teacher because the story was second hand and she felt she was not representing the teacher well. I did not respond to her.

A few days later I received an e-mail from her telling me how she had “thought and thought about using the word “lazy” to describe the boy” and my response had made her think “how loaded the word is especially for a White teacher describing a Black student and how it hid a lot from view and ... may further racist attitudes”. More importantly she said she was going to “have a conversation” with the teacher because the word does not reflect the deeper level of understanding that the teacher brings to her work with the children.

Our writing group served as an example of a genuine attempt to address racial differences in the struggle to bring about better educational opportunities for all the students present in our classrooms. My role in this group was to continuously raise examples from my lived experiences for a group of women with no experience of discordant racial identity in daily encounters. Therefore, this dissertation allowed for a primary connection between my racial identity and my future professional goals in teaching and educational practices.

Written Consent Form

To Participants in this study:

My name is Sandras M. Barnes and I am a graduate student at Lesley College in Cambridge. The subject of my doctoral research is: "The Connections Between Teachers' Racial Identity and Their Teaching Practices". You are one of approximately twelve Black and White female participants.

As part of this study you are being asked to participate in two one-hour interviews and one classroom observation. The first interview will focus on your personal background, educational experience, racial background and a description of your classroom. The second interview will focus on your thoughts about the racial climate in your school district, your school and its community and school building; and what has been offered through professional development to raise your racial awareness and that of your students in the context of your teaching practices. The observation will focus on teacher-student interactions, instructional routine, and classroom environment. As the interviews proceed, I may ask an occasional question for clarification or for further understanding, but mainly my part will be to listen as you recreate your experience within the structure and focus of the two interviews.

The goal is to analyze the data from the interviews and observation to better understand if and how teachers think about their racial identity and the effect it has on their teaching practices. As part of my dissertation, I may compose the materials from your interviews as a "profile" in your words. I may also wish to use some of the interview material for journal articles or presentation to interested groups, or for instructional purposes in my teaching. I may wish to write a book based on the dissertation.

In all written materials and oral presentations in which I might use material from your interview, I will not use your name, names of people mentioned, or the name of your school. Each interview will be audiotape and later transcribed by a typist who will be committed, as I am, to confidentiality. Again, identification of transcripts will be typed with initials for name, and in final form the interview material will use pseudonyms.

You may at any time withdraw from the interview process. You may withdraw your consent to have any specific excerpts used, if you notify me at the end of the interview series. If I want to use any materials in any way not consistent with what is stated above, I will ask for your additional written consent.

I, _____ have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

Signature of the participant

Date

Signature of interviewer

Date

Appendix 2

Observation Protocol

Teacher Student Interaction

- ☐ Moves around the classroom in physical proximity to all children
- ☐ An open body posture
- ☐ Uses eye contact
- ☐ Smiles when appropriate
- ☐ Address each student by name
- ☐ Really listens to what children say
- ☐ Gives explicit directions
- ☐ Uses cooperative learning strategies to create a sense of belonging
- ☐ Encourages active participation
- ☐ Gives immediate feedback
- ☐ Adjust voice to situation

Instructional Routine

- ☐ Encourages hand raising
- ☐ Wait time for response
- ☐ Clear and explicit goals and expectations about classroom interactions
- ☐ Compliments and praises students when following procedures and achieving academic success
- ☐ Encourages dialogue between students and use appropriate and engaging language
- ☐ Demands and holds high academic expectations and behavioral standards for each student
- ☐ Connect students and subject matter to teaching and learning
- ☐ Sensitive to racial issues in the classroom
- ☐ Seating and grouping of students
- ☐ Asking and answering of questions: i.e. Are students encouraged to grapple with problems and explain what they are doing?
- ☐ Multiply ways of responding to students' answers
- ☐ Observes and listens to students as individuals and as a group

Classroom Environment

- ☐ Arrangement of desk/chairs
- ☐ Bulletin Boards
- ☐ Display of students' work
- ☐ Bookshelves i.e. teachers & student books
- ☐ Decorations
- ☐ Noise level

Appendix 3

Interview Questions

Interview 1

1. Where were you born?
2. Are you between the ages: 30-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, over 50?
3. Where did you attend school (K-12) and college?
4. When did you decide to become a teacher? Why?
5. Describe your educational experience that prepared you to be a teacher.
6. Talk to me about your teaching career. How long? Where?
7. How long have you been here?
8. What led you to this current assignment?
9. What from your life experiences do you think influence your teaching practices?
10. Tell me a story of when you first became aware of racial differences. What effect did it have on you?
11. What do you consider as your racial identity?
12. Do you think that a teacher's racial identity is important to her teaching practices? Why?
13. In what ways has your racial identity influenced your teaching practices?
14. What is your philosophy of education?
15. Describe your classroom and teaching practices.

Interview II

1. Describe the racial climate within the school. Interactions between adults, adults & children and children & children.
2. Is it your sense that students notice race? Can you give some example of that?
3. Has the district offered professional development programs that address racial issues?
4. What kinds of professional development have you attended that addressed racial issues?
5. What kinds of supports, activities, or programs would you need to help you address racial identity and racial issues in your teaching practices?
6. What other kinds of program is being offered by the community and the school community to address the racial climate within the school and your classroom?
7. Does the district have policies that affect the school's racial climate? What is the impact of those policies? What are additional things the district can do?
8. Are there any final points you wish to make, things that might have been omitted?

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